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WHITHER?

A THEOLOGICAL QUESTION FOR THE TIMES

BY

CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, D.D.

DAVENPORT PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND THE COGNATE LANGUAGES IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NEW YORK

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This Book

IS DEDICATED AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM AND FRIENDSHIP.

PREFACE.

THIS book is a product of more than twenty years of study in the history of Puritan Theology, and especially of the Westminster divines, the authors of the Westminster Standards.

In the years 1866–1869 the author was in Berlin, engaged partly in the study of exegetical theology and oriental languages with Dr. Aemilius Roediger, and partly in the study of the history of doctrine under the guidance of Dr. Isaac Dorner. He undertook a special study of the history of the doctrine of Justification by Faith and its relation to Sanctification. In this study he learned the failures of the Protestant scholastics from the faith of the Reformation. When he came to the study of the Westminster Confession he was surprised to find that it had not only retained the pure faith of the Reformation, but had advanced upon it in the unfolding of the doctrines of Sanctification, Faith, and Repentance. This was a surprise, because it had not been noted by any of the British or American divines whose works he had studied, and it was entirely in advance of the faith of the British and American Churches.

Since that time his study of the Westminster Standards, in the light of the Westminster divines and their Puritan associates and precursors, has continued with

constantly increasing interest. He has spared no time, labor, or expense in searching the original editions and manuscript sources of all documents relating to this subject; spending many months in the chief libraries of Great Britain and in the lesser Puritan libraries; and diligently searching in old book-stores for every book, tract, and manuscript that could be found and purchased. During the past fourteen years the kind friend, to whom this book is dedicated, has furnished all the funds that were necessary for making these purchases. This entire collection was given by Mr. McAlpin to the library of the Union Theological Seminary, which now contains the best Westminster Library in the world.

These studies of the Westminster divines disclosed the fact that modern Presbyterianism had departed from the Westminster Standards, all along the line. It is not strange that this departure has been unconscious, for the Westminster divines have been entirely neglected by the dogmaticians of our century. They have not been read. One looks in vain for their names in the works of Presbyterian divines. Instead of them the scholastic divines of the seventeenth century, of the continent of Europe, have been used as authorities; and consequently the dogmaticians have taught in their systems the scholastic theology of the continent of Europe, and have interpreted the Westminster Standards to correspond with it.

The author has been troubled for some years with these facts. He has occasionally referred to them incidentally in connection with various theological discussions in which he has been engaged; but he has hesitated to disclose all the facts for fear of exciting theological controversy and of doing more injury than good to the kingdom of Christ. He has waited for an external call

to publish them. This call came in May last, through the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America with regard to the revision of the Confession of Faith. Accordingly he turned aside from other literary work to fulfil this duty.

The question of revision of the Westminster Standards has become the burning question of the Presbyterian world by simultaneous action of the General Assemblies of the American and Scottish Churches. Before the ministers can act intelligently it is necessary that they should know the facts that are presented to the readers of this volume.

My friend, the Rev. Charles R. Gillett, the librarian of the Union Theological Seminary, has greatly aided me by preparing the Index, a work for which he has unusual qualifications.

This book is historical. It aims to show what the Westminster Standards are, what the Presbyterian Churches have done with them in the past, and to interpret them by copious citations from their authors. Only by such a study can any one intelligently consider the question of Revision.

The book is polemical. It is necessary to overcome that false orthodoxy which has obtruded itself in the place of the Westminster orthodoxy. I regret, on many accounts, that it has been necessary for me to attack so often the elder and younger Hodge, divines for whom I have great respect and admiration. Their names will always rank among the highest on the roll of American theologians. It has also been necessary to expose the errors of my younger associates in the editorship of the *Presbyterian Review*, and other divines, my friends and colleagues. The reader will see that this polemic has

nothing in it of a personal or partisan character; it could not be avoided in the line of discussion that has been undertaken; for it is the theology of the elder and younger Hodge that has in fact usurped the place of the Westminster theology in the minds of a large proportion of the ministry of the Presbyterian Churches, and now stands in the way of progress in theology and of true Christian orthodoxy; and there is no other way of advancing in truth except by removing the errors that obstruct our path.

The book is irenical. It shows that there have been so many departures from the Standards in all directions, that it is necessary for all parties in the Presbyterian Churches to be generous, tolerant, and broad-minded. The author does not wish to exclude from the Church those theologians whom he attacks for their errors. He is a broad-churchman and all his sympathies are with a comprehensive Church, in which not only these divines shall be tolerated, but all other true Christian scholars shall be recognized, and wherein all Christians may unite for the glory of Christ. He rejoices in all earnest efforts for Christian Unity, not only in Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, but in the entire Christian world.

The book is catholic. The six chapters that make up the body of the book use the Westminster Standards as the test of orthodoxy, to determine the extent of departures from them in the Presbyterian Churches. But the doctrines discussed in them are those in which all Christian Churches are interested. The author has kept in mind the common interests of Catholic Christianity, and he has not hesitated to use on occasion a higher test of orthodoxy than the Westminster symbols. What has been done in six chapters of this book for the Pres-

byterian Churches could be done for all the other Protestant Churches. They all alike have departed from their official standards of doctrine. What then is to be done under these circumstances? *Whither* are Christians to direct their minds and energies? It is the main intent of the book to ask this question, and to give, in some measure, an answer to it. Accordingly the two introductory and the two concluding chapters are wider than Presbyterianism, and have in mind the Christian world.

The process of dissolution has gone on long enough. The time has come for the reconstruction of theology, of polity, of worship, and of Christian life and work. The drift in the Church ought to stop. Christian divines should steer directly toward the divine truth, as the true and only orthodoxy, and strive for the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The barriers between the Protestant denominations should be removed and an organic union formed. An Alliance should be made between Protestantism and Romanism and all other branches of Christendom. The Lambeth Conference, in its proposals for Christian Unity, points in the right direction. The Church of England is entitled to lead. Let all others follow her lead and advance steadily toward Christian Unity.

True Christian orthodoxy will stand firm on the consensus of Christendom, will debate the dissensus in an irenic spirit, and will advance bravely until it master the sum total of truth that God may reveal unto us, and exhibit the fulness of Christian life into which the divine Spirit may guide us.

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CHAPTER I.

Drifting.

Religion in Great Britain and America is at present in a very unsatisfactory condition. There is a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the Old Theology, and the old methods of worship and church work. At the same time there is distrust and anxiety with reference to new theology and new measures that are proposed by recent theological doctors. The ministers are not preaching the distinctive doctrines of the Old Theology, or the peculiar features of their own denominations, because the people are tired of them, and will not have them. The ministers do not care to preach to empty pews, and besides, not a few of the ministers sympathize with their people in these matters. The ministers are in a feverish condition. Some are desirous of adapting the Old Theology and old methods to the new conditions and circumstances; others are opposed to any changes in the old types; there are some hot champions of the new, and there are some sturdy defenders of the old; but the majority do not care to disturb the peace, and are waiting for light and guidance. There are some few who have real insight into the situation, and therefore hesitate to incur the responsibility for that dreadful theological struggle that is liable to burst forth on the first exciting occasion.

The Christian people are not generally concerned

about theological questions, but they are deeply interested in the more practical matters of Christian life and work. They have the same dissatisfaction and uncertainty here, that their pastors feel in the theoretical parts of theology. The churches fail to do the Christian work they ought to do. Schemes are devised and organizations are multiplied to make up for the deficiencies of the churches. Each new scheme is to supplement the older schemes and do some neglected work; but in most cases they prove to be only new forms of doing old work, and therefore they compete with the older organizations and work confusion. They are all alike defective, they do not realize the Christian ideal, they do not satisfy the Christian heart. There are, indeed, many ways of doing good, but the multiplication of agencies is a sign of the dissatisfaction and discontent with the churches which ought to do all this work that is done outside of them, and much more work that is still left undone and for which no provision has been made.

One of the most distressing signs of the times is the failure of the Church to evangelize the masses in the great cities. There is a chasm between the poorer classes and those who are comfortable and wealthy. The Gospel is glad tidings to the poor; and yet the poor have not that interest in the Gospel that we have a right to expect. The churches do not make sufficient provision for them, and do not reach them in any adequate measure. The free churches of America have failed in providing the Gospel for the poor by private benevolence, no less than the established churches of Europe by inadequate provision of the State.

There have been several efforts made in recent times to overcome this difficulty. The most important of

these is the "Salvation Army," under the management of General Booth. Whatever objections there may be against the army in some of its doctrines and methods, there can be little doubt that it has accomplished a great work among the masses who do not go to church. But it virtually adds a new denomination to the too many already in existence, and it does not provide for the education of a ministry and the Christian nurture of its converts.

Another strong effort has been put forth by Mr. Moody and other so-called evangelists who have pursued his methods. Great combinations are made with great effort and great noise for a little while here and there, and much good was accomplished, but with the cessation of the special efforts everything goes back to the former state of things. There is nothing permanent about these evangelistic labors. Moreover, Mr. Moody and his followers are crude in their theology, they pursue false methods in the interpretation of Scripture, and therefore they spread abroad not a few serious errors, and on the whole work disorganization and confusion. They do not edify the Church of Christ, they do not organize and train the awakened and converted. The churches ought to do all this work of evangelization and vastly more that is left undone.

Efforts have been made in recent years, both in Great Britain and America, for more efficient Christian work by the organization of several new enterprises in closer connection with the churches. The most efficient of these are the "Guilds of the Church of Scotland" and the "Society of Christian Endeavor" in America. These have proved great blessings to the young people and the churches that have employed them, and are the most encouraging signs of real progress.

In the meanwhile the barriers between the several denominations of Christians have been broken down and pierced in so many places that they no longer prevent the transition of ministers from one fold to another. The removal of people from denomination to denomination has long been quite easy. There is a deep and wide-spread feeling of the enormous waste that comes from the multiplication of organizations, and the intricate and conflicting machinery of missions and benevolent work. The longing for Christian unity is becoming stronger in all parts of the Christian Church.

What then is the meaning of the strife between the old and the new, and what is to come out of this seething mass of dissatisfaction and longing? There are dreadful possibilities of discord, strife, schism, and chaos of sects. But there are also blessed possibilities of concord, co-operation, and the reunion of Christendom.

The work of foreign missions has assumed vast dimensions in our times. The whole world has been opened to the preaching of the Gospel. The Christian Church has an opportunity of serving Christ such as it has never had before since the first advent of our Lord. Great progress in foreign missions has been made in the present century; but any one who looks at the vastness of the heathen world and the countless millions who have never heard of the glad tidings of redemption by Jesus Christ, and considers the wealth and power of Christian nations, will see that the Christian Church has not grasped the situation, and that Christian people are incurring a dreadful guilt before God, if the doctrine of the lost condition of these heathen be a true one. It may be asked, which are the more guilty, those who need the Gospel and have it not, or those who have the Gospel and do not value it sufficiently to give it to those

who cannot be saved without it? From this point of view it may be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Pekin, Calcutta, and Yeddo than for London, New York, and Chicago.

Those who are anxiously contending for the Old Theology, and are opposing any modification of its types, do not discern the signs of the times. What they mean by the Old Theology is in the most cases their own old theology, the theology they have been taught in their youth, which they have never really mastered, but which they have adhered to as a matter of tradition and duty. They have no conception how greatly the Church has advanced in the past, and how greatly they themselves differ from the standards of the church to which they profess strict adherence.

Any one who will take the trouble to study any of the Christian denominations of Europe or America in its present condition, and to compare the current theology and life with the theology and life of its founders, will be easily convinced that there have been great changes. These changes have been due in part to the assimilation of one denomination to another, in part to the assimilation of the churches to the political, social, philosophical, and scientific conditions of the age, in part to the eccentricities of certain influential leaders, who have risen up from time to time, and also in part to a general advance in religion. All Christian denominations have drifted from their standards, and are drifting at the present time. No one who has examined the facts and considered the historical situation can doubt it. The question that troubles us the most is—Whither?

CHAPTER II.

ORTHODOXY.

ORTHODOXY is right thinking about the Christian Religion: not that Orthodoxy consists only in thinking, but that right thinking involves right teaching and right acting.

No thinking can be right that is not in accordance with the truth. Truth is the daughter of God. She is one, and she cannot be rightly known in parts or sections; for no one can rightly know the various parts who does not see them centering in their unity; and no one can rightly know their unity who does not comprehend the variety that springs therefrom. Hence all human orthodoxy is partial and incomplete. No one can be entirely orthodox, as no one can be altogether good, save God only.

Orthodoxy, so far as man is concerned, is relative and defective; it is measured by the knowledge that he has of the truth. Man's knowledge is not a constant quantity. It varies in different men, in different nations and societies, and still more in different epochs of history.

The Pharisees claimed to be orthodox, and in their pretended orthodoxy condemned the Saviour of the world. The Greek Church claims to be orthodox, and has remained stationary in its stereotyped forms of thinking for centuries. The Roman Catholic Church parades its unity, catholicity, and orthodoxy, and yet it persecuted the pious and used every diabolical art to prevent

the Reformation of the Church. The Lutheran scholastics claimed the possession of the pure doctrine, and in the name of orthodoxy made war upon the vital piety of Spener and the Pietists. The Reformed scholastics in the interest of orthodoxy divided the Church into hostile camps, and their successors have been busy sowing discord, making strife, battling with science, philosophy, art, and every form of human thinking, and thus rending the Church of Jesus Christ into numerous sects. Orthodoxy has been made the pretext for oppression and crime, the foe to progress in science and theology, the enemy of the truth in all ages. Orthodoxy is a good thing, one of the best things, but it has been put to shame by the great number of counterfeits that have circulated in the world.

ORTHODOXY AND ORTHODOXISM.

It is necessary to distinguish between true orthodoxy and false orthodoxy—between orthodoxy and orthodoxism. Orthodoxism assumes to know the truth and is unwilling to learn; it is haughty and arrogant, assuming the divine prerogatives of infallibility and inerrancy; it hates all truth that is unfamiliar to it, and persecutes it to the uttermost. But orthodoxy loves the truth. It is ever anxious to learn, for it knows how greatly the truth of God transcends human knowledge. It follows the truth, as Ruth did Naomi, wherever it leads. It is meek, lowly, and reverent. It is full of charity and love. It does not recognize an infallible pope: it does not bow to an infallible theologian. It has one only teacher and master—the enthroned Saviour, Jesus Christ—and expects to be guided by His Spirit into all truth.

Orthodoxy has a different meaning in different lands and different ages, depending partly on the stage of

the education of our race, and partly upon the different race or national characteristics and the temperaments that distinguish mankind.

There must be some objective standard, some comprehensive statement by which the relative orthodoxy of men may be estimated and measured. The absolute standard of human orthodoxy is the sum total of truth revealed by God. God reveals truth in several spheres; in universal nature, in the constitution of mankind, in the history of our race, and in the sacred Scriptures, but above all in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

If a man has mastered this entire revelation of the truth, all that science, philosophy, history, the sacred Scriptures and Jesus Christ can give him, then, and then only, he may claim to be entirely orthodox. His orthodoxy has revealed its limit and its perfection. But until that desirable result has been attained, orthodoxy is variable and progressive; it is partial and incomplete, and must go on to reach perfection and completion. Hence, for all practical purposes, Orthodoxy and Progressive Orthodoxy are convertible terms.

That man or church whose orthodoxy does not make progress, ceases thereby to be orthodox, and from the necessities of the case becomes heterodox. He refuses to accept the truth that is offered him by the advances in science, philosophy, history, and the more exact study of the sacred Scriptures. He is heterodox, in that he falls short of the revealed truth that the truly orthodox have already accepted. He is also heterodox in all that he does accept and teach; for he keeps his thinking and teaching in the shadow of stereotyped forms of thought; he declines to bring his knowledge into the full light of the truth, which like the sun has risen higher toward its zenith; he prefers his darkness to the light of God; he

fears to look the truth in the eyes, lest he should be convicted of error, and be compelled to change his position, his convictions and statements. Intellectual timidity and cowardice are not consistent with Christian orthodoxy. True orthodoxy is brave, manly, and aggressive; it marches forward.

Truth is so connected and interwoven in an organism that an advance in any department exerts an important influence upon the whole system. Any man or church that refuses to accept the discoveries of science or the truths of philosophy or the facts of history, or the new light that breaks forth from the Word of God to the devout student, on the pretence that it conflicts with his orthodoxy or the orthodoxy of the standards of his church, prefers the traditions of man to the truth of God, has become unfaithful to the calling and aims of the Christian disciple, has left the companionship of Jesus and His apostles and has joined the Pharisees, the enemies of the truth. He that is born of God heareth God's words. The man who has within him the spirit of truth, and is following the guidance of the divine Spirit of truth, will hail the truth and embrace it whether he has seen it before or not; and he will not be stayed by the changes, that he fears may be necessary, in his preconceptions or prejudices, or his civil, social, or ecclesiastical position. A traditional attitude of mind is one of the worst foes to orthodoxy.

ORTHODOXY AND THE SCRIPTURES.

We have an infallible standard of orthodoxy in the sacred Scriptures. God himself, speaking in His holy Word to the believer, is the infallible guide in all questions of religion, doctrine, and morals. But the sacred Scriptures do not decide for us all questions of ortho-

doxy. They do not answer the problems of science, of philosophy, or of history. They do not cover the whole ground of theology. There are important matters in which the Christian religion enters into the spheres of science, philosophy, and history where the divine revelation given in these departments of knowledge is either presupposed by the sacred Scriptures, or else has been left by them for mankind to investigate and use in the successive constructions of Christian theology, which have gone on since the apostolic age, and which will continue until the end of the world.

The sacred Scriptures are not the only source of Christian theology; they were given in the midst of other sources of knowledge to enlighten us in the fields where these were insufficient. The New Testament does not give us the entire instruction of Jesus Christ, the sum total of apostolic doctrine.

The Bible does not decide all questions of religion. It does not decide the mode of baptism; it does not clearly determine whether infants are to be baptized; it does not definitely confirm the change from the Sabbath to the Lord's day; it does not determine the question of liturgical worship; it does not clearly fix the mode of church government. It leaves a great number of questions upon which Christians are divided undetermined.

The Bible does not decide all questions of doctrine. It does not give us the mode of creation, the origin of sin and evil, the psychological construction of human nature, the reasons of the divine election, the mode of life in the middle state. If the current systematic theology were reduced to its Biblical dimensions and then extended so as to cover the Biblical ground, it would be so different that few would recognize it.

The Bible does not decide all questions of morals. It does not decide against slavery or polygamy; it does not determine a thousand political and social questions that have sprung up in our day.

Doubtless there are general principles given in the Bible that may guide us to the solution of all these questions. But it is high time for men to cease confounding Biblical statements with the conclusions that they have drawn from these statements. The religion, doctrine, and morals of the Bible are very different from the current religion, doctrines, and morals of the Church, whether expressed by systematic statements, or in the lives and teachings of the people.

None of the older divines gave the human reason its proper place in religion and theology. They were all too much involved in the older methods of exegesis which sought to prove everything possible from the Bible. It was necessary that there should be a long conflict with Deism in order to eliminate *Natural Theology* as a distinct theological discipline; and then the long conflict with Rationalism in order to establish the place of *Speculative Theology*. The Bible does not war against the truths of nature, of the reason, or of history. It rather concentrates their instruction in its central Revelation.

The Scriptures shine with heavenly light in the midst of the sources of human knowledge. They cannot be understood alone by themselves. It is probable that the reason why the Scriptures have not been more completely mastered in our time, is that the divine truth revealed in other spheres has not been brought into proper relation with the Scriptures. The sacred Scriptures are for the whole world and for all time. As man grows in the knowledge of nature, of himself and of history, he will grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures.

The sources of knowledge are so interrelated that they cannot be entirely understood apart from the whole organism of truth. The Reformation would have been impossible without the new birth of learning that preceded it—the emancipation of the human spirit from the bondage of mediæval scholasticism. The present advance in science is preparing the way for another reformation of the Church—it is emancipating us from the bondage of Protestant scholasticism.

We are well aware that there are some theologians, especially in America, who have claimed that their system of theology is altogether Biblical, and who have made it their boast that they have taught nothing new in theology. But, to say the least, these theologians are mistaken; they have deceived themselves, and they delude others. In fact they have restated the scholastic formulas of Protestantism; they have appropriated from other spheres of learning all the truth that seemed to suit their purpose and that could be used in their system. They have done precisely the same in their use of the sacred Scriptures.

Biblical theology is a recent branch of theological science that sprang from the necessity of distinguishing between the theology of the Bible and the theology of the theologians.* Any one who has taken the trouble to compare the two has noticed the difference. He finds that each Biblical writer has his own range of ideas and each writing its own scope, and that it is necessary to gather this vast variety in a higher unity in order to comprehend the sum total of the theology of the Bible. He also sees that every age has its own circle of thought and every theologian his point of view and every Chris-

* Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 367 *seq.*

tian church its peculiar mission. The sum of Biblical theology is not represented in any creed or any theologian. Many Biblical doctrines were overlooked by the ancient and the mediæval churches, and were first brought into their influential position at the Reformation. But the student of Biblical theology finds that the Reformers built also on too narrow ground, chiefly upon the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. There are not a few who still find the theology of Paul in the epistle to the Romans, and build their system upon that. But in fact, no one can understand the doctrine of Paul who has not advanced beyond the epistle to the Romans and apprehended the more developed Christology of the epistles of the imprisonment. Protestantism, by building too exclusively on Paul and on his earlier epistles at that, can never attain the climax of Christian orthodoxy until it enlarges its horizon by a more faithful use of the Pauline epistles of the imprisonment, and also of the theology of James, Peter, and John. Our orthodoxy cannot be Biblical orthodoxy until it has comprehended the sum total of the theology of the Bible both in its variety and unity. But even if this maximum were attained, the maximum of Christian orthodoxy would not be reached. Indeed the Bible itself cannot be thus mastered unless a corresponding advance is made in other departments. Even Christ does not open up the Scriptures to His people until they are prepared to understand and use the knowledge given to them.

Christian theology must be constructed by the induction of divine truth from all spheres of information. There is no system of theology which has not been influenced by the discoveries of science, the principles of philosophy, and the events of history, as well as by the

temperaments and characteristic features of the individual writer, his nation and race.

As the Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly well said:

"All the books of God are perfect, the book of life, the book of nature, the book of providence, and especially the book of Scripture, which was dyted by the Holy Ghost to be a perfect directory to all the churches unto the second coming of Jesus Christ, but so that it presupposeth the light and law of nature, or rules of common prudence, to be our guide in circumstances or things local, temporal, and personal." *

But unfortunately there are not a few theologians who have mingled bad science, false philosophy, traditional history, and incorrect exegesis with the genuine truth of the Word of God; they have given forth this mixture of wood, hay, straw, and stubble with the fine gold, as the standard of orthodoxy, and have presumed to set it up as a bulwark against the vast and profound discoveries of modern science. We are not surprised that we are hearing shrieks and groans as we see these airy structures disappearing in the flames that have been kindled by the torch of Truth, who is tired of such foolery.

Such theologians have assumed an unfriendly attitude to science, philosophy, and history, and even the scientific study of the Scriptures. They have refused to taste the fruits of modern methods and modern learning. They have appropriated with marvellous caprice whatever seemed to suit their purpose. They have delighted in any little flaws and mistakes of scholars. They have stoutly resisted everything that was antagonistic to their traditional system. They have been impatient of new

* "Reformation of Church Govt. in Scotland cleared from some mistakes and prejudices by the Commissioners of the Gen. Assembly of the Church of Scotland now in London," 1644.

truths and branded them as "novelties." They have made Christian theology the enemy of human learning so far as they have been able to exert an influence. They have been the true successors of the Pharisees. They have zealously contended to do what the Roman Catholic hierarchy failed in doing. They have not succeeded in retarding human learning, but they have alienated a large proportion of the scholars of the world from the Christian Church. They have wrought serious damage to the science of Christian theology. Such pretended orthodoxy is real heterodoxy. It is to blame for the dethronement of theology from its rightful position as the queen of the sciences. God has dethroned her for a season as He did Nebuchadnezzar, because she exalted herself against the truth of God, but after a season of humiliation she will be enthroned again.

The sacred Scriptures contain a divine revelation to mankind for all ages. They are a treasury of grace to train our race and guide the world until the second advent of Jesus Christ. What theologian or what Christian Church has mastered them? Through all the ages of Church History there has been a progressive appropriation of the Word of God in worship, doctrine, and life. The Scripture and man are counterparts. The Bible contains its special revelation for every man and every race and every epoch,—for the entire world. It is on this account a unique book, a divine book. Has Protestantism attained the maximum of Christian doctrine? Has Calvinism solved the mysteries of the Christian religion? Has Puritanism or Methodism transformed the world? These religious movements have all been blessed by God and have wrought great good by their progressive orthodoxy. They have each in turn been opposed by a pretended orthodoxy that had

apostatized from real orthodoxy. In every case these religious movements, like all the religious movements that preceded them, eventually became stereotyped in a dead orthodoxy that blocked the way of further progress. Greek Christianity could not restrain the advance of Roman Christianity, and Roman Christianity did not prevent the advance of German Christianity in the great Reformation. The entire world is now open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Asia and Africa, America and the islands of the sea are to unite with Europe in the worship of Jesus Christ and the study of the mysteries of our religion. Can we suppose that our Teutonic type of Christianity will be imposed upon the Oriental and African races? Is there any prospect whatever that the Greek and Latin and Slavonic races will adopt the Teutonic type? Let us not deceive ourselves. The Bible is for the world. The Christian religion is for all mankind. The ultimate Christianity that will suit our race will be as much higher than Protestantism as Protestantism is higher than Romanism. Yes, it will be vastly more exalted; for it will be so comprehensive that all the types of Christianity will advance unto it as the ultimate form for which they have all been preparing through the centuries under the guidance of the divine Spirit.

There is more light to break forth from the Word of God to illuminate our religion, our doctrines, and our life, and make them higher and more glorious. The divine Spirit will enlighten the future generations still more than He has enlightened the past generations. He is the guide of the Church to the end of the world. Has orthodoxy made progress in the past? It will make greater progress in the future. Presbyterianism is not the last word of God to man. God has something vastly

better for us than Calvinism. Puritanism is not the ultimate form of Christianity. The Anglo-Catholic revival has not attained the ideal of Christ.

The prejudices of traditionalism cannot stay the advancing truth of God. Every form of Christianity that has opposed the progress of doctrines in the past has been cast aside and left behind in the race. Are Protestantism, Calvinism, Puritanism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Anglo-Catholicism to have the same fate? They have all come to a halt in religious, doctrinal, and ethical progress. They have all alike become stereotyped in church order and types of doctrine. But there is a stir amid the dry bones. What is to come out of it all? Is there to be another Reformation that will throw them aside? Is there to issue forth a new orthodoxy leaving the reacting heterodoxy in its present lifeless position? Or will the vital forces that are at work in the Protestant Churches be sufficient to revive them and lead them on to a higher destiny? It would seem that the types of Protestantism have still a work to do in the world. We believe that the Churches of Protestantism are ripening for a better future in which all the Churches of the world will share.

God is speaking to His Church with an imperative voice and commanding it to go forward. The progress of learning in our day has been marvellous. The Bible itself has been flooded with the new light cast upon it from all directions by modern discoveries. The spirit of research animates a large number of professors and students of theology and Christian ministers and Christian people of all ranks. These are still in the minority.

There is a freer theological atmosphere in England and Scotland, but in Ireland and America Orthodoxism and Traditionalism are still predominant, and thinkers

are obliged to work cautiously. But there are not a few in America who are striving earnestly to advance in Christian orthodoxy. Exegetical theology is passing through a transformation. The Bible is studied by theological students as never before. Historical theology is beginning to share in the same movement. Practical theology is also active and aggressive. Systematic theology alone is pulling back. But this will not endure. There are noble Christian theologians who are at work reconstructing the system of doctrine. The old traditional systems are the rallying-points of Orthodoxism and Traditionalism. They do not realize the facts of the case. They do not see what is manifest to the rest of the world—that the Traditional Orthodoxy has been undermined and honey-combed by the recent Biblical and historical studies, as well as by the newer science and philosophy. Unless it can be strengthened by better exegesis and history and be more conformed to truth and fact, it will soon crumble and perish. We greatly need a system of theology that will embrace the results of modern learning.

Dogmatic Theology in Great Britain and America has been too long in the bondage of the seventeenth century Scholasticism and the eighteenth century Apologetics. The time has come for it to burst these bonds and march forward. It ought to run with all its might and march at the head of the column of modern learning. Christ is the king of a kingdom of truth, and His followers ought to be ashamed to drag His banner in the rear.

The battle against science, philosophy, exegesis, and history must come to an end. All truth should be welcomed, from whatever source, and built into the structure of Christian doctrine. The attitude of *Tradi-*

tional Orthodoxy should be abandoned as real heterodoxy, and the attitude of *Advancing Orthodoxy* assumed as the *true* orthodoxy.

ORTHODOXY AND THE SYMBOLS OF FAITH.

But have we not standards of orthodoxy in the Confessions of Faith and the Symbolical Books of the Church? Certainly! Most Christian Churches have such symbolical books, which constitute the standard of orthodoxy for their own church organizations and determine what is Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican, or Congregational orthodoxy. But they do not determine *Christian Orthodoxy*. Christian orthodoxy is defined by those symbols in which the universal Church unites. These symbols are the Apostles' Creed and the Creeds of the great Œcumenical Councils. There was no symbolical advance during the Middle Ages. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were centuries of great symbolical progress. But this progress consisted in defining the distinctive faiths of the different denominations that sprang into existence at the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church defined its faith at the Council of Trent. Its decrees define orthodoxy in the Roman Catholic Church. But their distinctive principles are heterodoxy to Protestants. The Lutherans defined their faith in the Augsburg Confession, and a later Scholastic Lutheranism eliminated itself from the milder Lutherans and Melancthonians in the so-called Formula of Concord. The Reformed Churches have no common creed, but formulated a number of symbols in different countries, the most important of which are the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic, Belgian, French, and Scottish Confessions, and the Articles of the Church of England. These agree in the main, and there is a con-

sensus that is not difficult to define. Scholastic Calvinism eliminated itself from the milder Calvinism, and the Arminians in the Decrees of the Synod of Dort. And thus each branch of the Church of Christ in Western Europe defined its own terms of orthodoxy, which excluded all who could not subscribe to them.

Protestantism is divided into numerous sects, and is confronted with innumerable tests of orthodoxy. There is a consensus of Protestant opinion which, if it could be defined and accepted by all, would be vastly more valuable than the best of the symbols or than all of them combined.

The most elaborate and definite of all the creeds of Protestantism are the Westminster symbols. The churches that adhere to these are the strictest in their adherence to the traditional orthodoxy. But it is clear to any one who has studied the genesis of the Westminster standards and the doctrinal history of Great Britain and America, that the Presbyterian and Congregational churches have drifted in many important respects from the Westminster orthodoxy.

This drift has been gradual and imperceptible under the leadership of able divines who did not take the trouble to study the Westminster divines, the authors of the standards, but who relied on their *a priori* logic for the correct interpretation of the standards as well as the Scriptures, and accordingly they interpreted both the Scriptures and the standards to correspond with that system of scholastic Calvinism which had become to them the rule of faith. It was an evil day for Presbyterianism when the Puritan and Presbyterian fathers were laid aside, and the scholastic divines of Switzerland and Holland were introduced into our universities and colleges as the text-books of theology, and the

tests of Orthodoxy. The Westminster symbols were buried under a mass of foreign dogma. Francis Turretine became the rule of faith, and the Westminster Confession was interpreted to correspond with his scholastic elaborations and refinements.

The same reasons that called forth the discipline of Biblical Theology, brought into being the discipline of Symbolics, for it became necessary not only to distinguish the theology of the Bible from the theology of the schools, but also to discriminate between the theology of the symbols and the theology of the theologians.

There is a tendency in all religions to make the traditional interpretation of the schools the tests of orthodoxy. This was the case with the Jews who buried the Old Testament under the traditions of the elders and that mass of elaboration of definitions that has been gathered in the Talmud. In the Church the Gospel was shrouded by the teachings of the Fathers, and orthodoxy was measured by Augustine and Aquinas rather than the New Testament.

The Reformation introduced a new age of the world, and made a grand step forward in the progress of Christianity. But the Pharisaic spirit entered into Protestantism and the process of decay began. Soon the principles of the Reformation and the doctrines of the Confessions and Catechisms were covered by a mass of scholastic dogma constructed out of the speculations of little popes who came into power in the several national churches of the Reformed and Lutheran types. Protestantism was stiffened, hardened, and paralyzed. The counter-reformation set in, and the Protestant churches exhausted themselves with internal strifes that have continued until the present time.

A new reformation is necessary. The temple of Theology must be cleansed from this theological rubbish; the

traders should be driven out; the fences erected between the denominations should be broken down. Heroic men are needed who shall burst the bonds that fetter the Word of God and retard the progress of Christian theology and life.

The Puritan reformation, called the second reformation, was the last great confessional movement of Protestantism. It was a fresh outburst of divine life in the churches of Great Britain. But, alas, Puritans soon became puritanical, and the broad, catholic, progressive theology of the Westminster standards was straitened and narrowed by the unworthy descendants of such heroic sires. They no longer studied the Westminster divines, but sought consolation in the muddy pools of Dutch and Swiss scholasticism. Under the guidance of these alien masters they abandoned the distinctive principles of Puritanism, they fell back from the lofty ethical ideas of the Westminster symbols, they introduced low views of the church and the sacraments, they strained and stiffened the hard doctrines of Calvinism, and finally marred the essential principles of the Reformation.

We do not claim that all of the work of the later dogmatists in Great Britain and America is bad. In this mass of dogma, some of it extra-confessional, some of it infra-confessional, and some of it contra-confessional, there is a mixture of truth and error. Doubtless there has been real progress in some directions, but there is an immense mass of crude speculation and of false reasoning. A thorough critical sifting is necessary. Advancing orthodoxy will reaffirm the authority of the Protestant symbols, strip off the mass of heterogeneous dogma heaped upon them by dogmaticians, deprive this stuff of its spurious claims of orthodoxy, and deal with it as it deserves in truth and righteousness.

CHAPTER III.

CHANGES.

WE propose to show that the American Presbyterian Church has drifted away from the Westminster Standards. This will appear in several successive chapters of this book. It is first necessary to consider the general attitude of the Traditional orthodoxy to these Standards.

WHAT ARE THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS?

The Westminster Assembly met in accordance with an ordinance of the English Parliament, July 1, 1643,

"to conferre and treat amongst themselves of such matters and things touching and concerning the liturgy, discipline, and government of the Church of England, or the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the same from all false aspersions and misconstructions."*

The Westminster divines were chosen to represent all the counties of England and Wales, the two universities, and all parties except the extreme high churchmen of the type of Laud, and the Anabaptists. The Church of Scotland sent commissioners, with the aim of "settling of the so-much-desired union of the whole island in one forme of Church government, one confession of faith, one common catechism, and one directory for the worship of God." These entered the Westminster Assembly, September 15th. On Monday, September 25th, the

* See Briggs' "Documentary History of the Westminster Assembly," *Presbyterian Review*, I., pp. 134 *seq.*

entire body with the House of Commons took the solemn league and covenant in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, including among other things the vow:

"We shall endeavor to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship, and catechising, that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us."

It is clear that the Westminster Assembly was more concerned with the practical matters of church government and worship than with matters of doctrine. It is interesting to note that the Westminster Assembly began their work by an attempt to revise the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England. They began July 8, 1643, and advanced as far as Article XVI., when on October 12th, Parliament required them "to take in hand the discipline and liturgy of the Church." This partial revision of the XXXIX Articles is important in the history of doctrine, but has never been adopted by any of the Presbyterian Churches. The most of the work on it was done before the Scottish commissioners entered the Assembly. If Scotland was to unite with England in one Confession, something more than a revision of these English Articles was required.

The Westminster Assembly began its work on the discipline of the Church, October 17, 1643, and continued to debate matters of church government and discipline until July 4, 1645, when the draft of government was completed and sent up to Parliament for approval. The work upon the liturgy of the Church began May 24, 1644, and continued until December 27th. The Westminster Assembly then undertook the composition of the doctrinal standards, but the work was frequently

interrupted by questions sent down from Parliament on the practical matters requiring immediate consideration. The work on the Confession began in the Assembly after preliminary work in special committees, July 7, 1645, and the debate continued until December 4th, when it was sent up to Parliament. The preparation of the proof-texts for the Confession took from January 6, 1647, until April 26th. The preparation of a Catechism had been given in charge to a committee of which Herbert Palmer was chairman. They began with a preliminary report May 13, 1645, but the Catechism did not come before the Assembly until September 14, 1646. The debate on the questions reported went on until January 4, 1647. There was a considerable difference of opinion as to the form and the extent of the Catechism. This difference was removed by the decision, January 14th, to prepare two Catechisms, a Larger and a Smaller. Accordingly the debate on the Larger Catechism began April 15, 1647, and continued until October 15th, when it was sent up to Parliament. Mr. Palmer was chiefly responsible for the doctrinal parts, as indeed the Larger Catechism was chiefly based on his Catechism; but Mr. Tuckney was the leader in the parts dealing with the Ten Commandments. The commissioners of the Church of Scotland took part in the preparation of all these documents, but left the Assembly soon afterward, October 19, 1647. Mr. Tuckney was made chairman of the committee on the Shorter Catechism. The debate began in the Assembly October 21st and continued until November 25th, when it was sent up to Parliament. The Scottish commissioners were not present and were not responsible for the composition of the Shorter Catechism. Parliament required the Assembly to prepare Scripture proofs for both Catechisms. This they began

to do November 30th, but did not complete their work until April 12, 1648.

This sketch of the work of the Westminster Assembly discloses several important facts that are commonly overlooked in our times.

1. As the Assembly was called by Parliament chiefly to determine the liturgy, discipline, and government of the Church, so they gave their attention to these matters above all others. This is clear, not only from the time consumed in the composition of the documents relating to discipline and worship, but also from the fact that these matters take up such an unusual amount of space in the Confession of Faith itself.

2. There were several stages in the composition of the doctrinal standards which are worthy of attention. Three months were spent in the revision of sixteen of the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England. These articles were carefully and thoroughly considered. The revision is valuable as showing the improvements of the Westminster divines in the statement of these doctrines. More than twenty months passed before the Assembly again took up doctrinal matters. In the meanwhile the Episcopal party had withdrawn from the Assembly, which thus became more compact and more strongly Presbyterian. It was determined to make a new Confession of Faith, and to abandon the revision of the old Articles. The composition of the Confession consumed five months. Dr. Temple and Mr. Reynolds seem to have been the leaders in this work. The composition of the Larger Catechism was a much more serious undertaking. Herbert Palmer was the leader in it. It took more than a year's work in the committee before it came before the Assembly. It was debated in the Assembly itself for thirteen months before adoption. It is, indeed, the most

carefully prepared of all the Westminster symbols. Its doctrinal statements are more guarded and more elaborate than those of the Confession of Faith. This is clear, especially in the doctrines of the Trinity, the Person and the Work of Christ, Sin, Effectual Calling, and the Sacraments. The reasons for these dogmatic elaborations in the Larger Catechism are to be found in the discussions that had broken out in conflict with heresies, and were making headway among the English people. The Larger Catechism may thus be considered the maturest expression of Westminster theology. The Shorter Catechism was prepared chiefly by Tuckney and Wallis in the brief space of five weeks, on the basis of the Larger Catechism by way of condensation and abridgment, after the Scottish commissioners had left the Assembly, and after many of the ablest divines had died or departed to their homes in different parts of England.

CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TO THE STANDARDS.

When we study the history of Presbyterianism in America it is evident that the attitude of the Presbyterian Church to the Westminster Standards has entirely changed.

1. The questions of government and worship, which were the most important things to the Westminster divines, have so declined in importance that the American Presbyterian Church has substituted new forms of government and discipline for the documents so carefully prepared by the Westminster Assembly. And the doctrinal standards which were then regarded as of less importance have risen to such supremacy that the only changes in them have been in questions that relate more or less to church government. The American Presbyterian Church has been radical and revolutionary in all

questions of government and liturgy; but in matters of doctrine has been more conservative than the Westminster divines themselves.

2. The doctrinal standard that received the most attention in the Westminster Assembly, the Larger Catechism, has fallen into neglect. It is little used, and indeed little known among ministers and teachers. On the other hand, the Shorter Catechism has become the favorite doctrinal standard; and yet it is brief and often unguarded in its definitions. It tends to a sterner Calvinism than the Larger Catechism on account of this brevity and conciseness, and in many cases cannot be understood until it is put in the light of the Larger Catechism.

3. The Westminster Standards were not composed with a view to subscription by ministers or elders, but for a public testimony of the faith of the Church. Anthony Tuckney tells us:

"In the Assemblie, I gave my vote with others that the Confession of Faith, put outt by Authority, should not bee eyther required to bee sworn or subscribed too; wee having bin burnt in the hand in that kind before, but so as not to be publickly preached or written against."*

Subscription to the Westminster Standards was imposed upon the Scotch Church by the Scottish Parliament, in the interest of breadth and liberty, to give all subscribers a right in the Church and to prevent that intolerance against the Episcopal clergy that burst out in Scotland at the Revolution and would drive them all from the Church. The Episcopal clergy who subscribed could not be excluded from the Church. It is thus one of the remarkable changes of history that a subscription

* "Eight Letters of Dr. Antony Tuckney and Benjamin Whichcote," London, 1753, p. 76.

that was ordered in the interest of toleration should become in after years the instrument of intolerance. Subscription was not required in Ireland until 1698, and was never used by English Presbyterians.

The subscription controversy that sprang up in the eighteenth century divided Presbyterianism in Ireland and America. The ablest and noblest divines resisted subscription as long as possible. It seemed to be necessary in order to keep out errors respecting the doctrine of the Trinity.*

The founders of the American Presbyterian Church did not subscribe to the Westminster Standards. The original Presbytery of Philadelphia knew nothing of subscription. The Synod of Philadelphia introduced it in 1729 when it passed the Adopting Act in which the ministers

"declare their agreement in, and approbation of, the Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as being in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine, and do also adopt the said Confession and Catechisms as the confession of our faith." †

This Adopting Act was framed by Jonathan Dickinson, the greatest divine the American Presbyterian Church has produced. He made our subscription generous and tolerant. We do not subscribe to every article, but only to "the essential and necessary articles"; that is, those essential to the Westminster system, as a system of doctrine.

The adoption of the ecclesiastical standards was still more liberal.

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* See Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 194 *seq.*

† *l. c.*, pp. 218 *seq.*

"The Synod do unanimously acknowledge and declare, that they judge tne Directory for Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church commonly annexed to the Westminster Confession, to be agreeable in substance to the Word of God, and founded thereupon, and therefore do earnestly recommend the same to all their members, to be by them observed as near as circumstances will allow, and Christian prudence direct."

It is clear here that the American Synod abandoned the *jure divino* Presbyterianism of the Westminster Standards and adopted a *substantial, prudential* Presbyterianism in its stead.*

Thus far, the American Presbyterian Church made no revision of any of the Westminster Standards, but only gave a definition of the measure of their adoption by the American Church. The doctrinal standards were adopted in all essential and necessary articles, the ecclesiastical standards, in substance, and as near as circumstances will allow and Christian prudence direct. This Adopting Act opened a broad and generous path by its terms of subscription.

REVISION OF THE STANDARDS.

The American Presbyterian Synod in 1788 made a thorough revision of the Standards preparatory to constituting the General Assembly. They adopted the Constitution consisting of the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Directory for Worship, and the Form of Government and Discipline. Their revision of the Westminster Standards was so thorough-going that it was revolutionary.

1. They made a new Form of Government and Discipline which they substituted for the Westminster Form of Government. This was revised again in 1805 in sev-

* See Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 220 *seq.*

eral chapters, and it has been revised several times in more recent years. The Southern Presbyterian Church, a few years ago, adopted a new "Book of Church Order," and the Northern Presbyterian Church, in 1884–85, made a new Book of Discipline. These revisions have been so radical as to change the doctrine of the officers of the Church and the structure of all ecclesiastical bodies from the Presbytery to the General Assembly.

2. The Synod of 1788 made a new Directory for Worship, casting the venerable Westminster Directory aside, not merely in its forms and language, but also in some of its most important principles and rules of worship. This Directory was revised again in 1821; and again in 1886, by the insertion of a new chapter, "Of the Worship of God by Offerings."

3. The Confession of Faith was revised in 1788 in the three chapters: xx. 4; xxiii. 3; xxxi. 1, and a new doctrine of the relation of Church and State was substituted for the Westminster doctrine. In 1887 the Northern Presbyterian Church revised chapter xxiv. 4, in order to get rid of the prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The Southern Presbyterian Church made the same revision. Thus the Confession of Faith has been revised in four different chapters by the American Presbyterian Church.

4. The Larger Catechism was revised in 1788 by striking out from Question 109 "*tolerating* a *false religion*." The Shorter Catechism, the least important of the Westminster symbols, is the only one that has escaped revision.

5. It is also noteworthy that the Synod of 1788 removed the whole body of proof-texts from the Standards and published the Constitution without any proof-

texts. We have seen that the Westminster Assembly not only had strong committees at work upon them, but also debated them in open Assembly. The proof-texts for the Confession consumed three months, and those in the Catechisms more than four months. The General Assembly in 1792 appointed a committee to prepare proof-texts for the Standards. This committee made a report of a specimen in 1794. They were directed to compare their work "with the proofs annexed to the Westminster Confession, Catechisms and Directory; to revise the whole, prepare it for the press, to agree with the printer for its publication, and to superintend the printing and sending of the same."

This careless way of adopting proof-texts, by giving a committee full power, is very striking when compared with the great pains taken in this regard by the Westminster Assembly. It is true these proof-texts are no part of the Constitution of the American Presbyterian Church; but they are printed by the authority of the General Assembly with the Constitution, and so the public are deceived as to their authority.

It is clear from this history that the American Presbyterian Church has been radical in its revisions of the Westminster Standards. The 177 ministers who constituted the Synod that adopted the Constitution, after such revolutionary proceedings, were not noted for their wisdom or ability. They were pious, excellent, practical men, but there was not one really eminent divine among them. There was not one who could rank as a first-rate authority in Biblical, historical, dogmatic, or even practical theology. They entirely set aside more than half of the work of the Westminster divines. There is no reason to doubt that they would have made a new Con-

fession of Faith and new Catechisms if they had deemed it wise so to do.

It is a strange idea that has sprung up in recent times with the growth of American scholastic dogmatics, that the Confession of Faith and Catechisms are more sacred than the Directory for Worship and the Form of Government. This conceit would have seemed very remarkable to the old Puritans and the Westminster divines, who made a life and death struggle for a church government and a mode of worship that were founded, as they supposed, on the divine right of the sacred Scriptures. They sustained all these documents alike by proof-texts from the Word of God. But some of their children, who have forsaken them in this as well as in other things, now wish to exalt their work in the doctrinal department above the possibility of revision. It is very remarkable that the Westminster divines should be so fallible in church government and worship and at the same time so infallible in their dogmatic theology. A deeper study of the divine Word has corrected their opinions in the former, as all admit; has it left their views on the latter entirely unchanged? No one would have repudiated such inconsistency more than the Westminster divines themselves.

THE MINISTRY.

The American Presbyterian Church has made very important changes in the doctrine of the ministry of the Church. This is evident when we see side by side the statements of the Westminster Form of Church Government, the Form of Government of the American Synod of 1788, and the Book of Church Order of the Southern Presbyterian Church:

WESTMINSTER.	NORTHERN CHURCH.	SOUTHERN CHURCH.
"The officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of the Saints are some extraordinary, as apostles, evangelists, and prophets, which are ceased. Others, ordinary and perpetual, as pastors, teachers, and other church governors and deacons."	"I. Our blessed Lord at first collected his Church out of different nations, and formed it into one body, by the mission of men endued with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased. "II. The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are Bishops or Pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled Ruling Elders; and Deacons."	"The ordinary and perpetual offices in the Church are, teaching Elders, or ministers of the Word, who are commissioned to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments and also to rule; Ruling Elders, whose office it is to wait on government; and Deacons, whose function is the distribution of the offerings of the faithful for pious uses."

The Southern book also divides the ministers of the Word into four classes—(1), the pastor; (2), the teacher; (3), the evangelist; and (4), the minister called to labor through the press or in any other like needful work.

There are several important changes in the doctrine of the ministry here.

(1). The Westminster divines distinguish between the extraordinary offices of the church, "apostles, evangelists, and prophets, which are ceased," and the ordinary and perpetual officers, "pastors, teachers, and other church governors and deacons." The American Form of Government neglects to specify these extraordinary offices that are ceased. This was done in order to remove the evangelists from this class. That this is the

case is clear from the insertion of a section in the Form of Government providing for the ordaining of the evangelists, which was an innovation in the Presbyterian doctrine of the ministry. The Southern Church went still further and made the evangelist co-ordinate with the pastor, teacher, and editor, as four different kinds of teaching elders. The American Church in its history has made an increasing use of so-called evangelists. Until recent years these have been ordained ministers in accordance with the doctrine set forth in the American Form of Government. But in recent years a considerable number of unordained evangelists have sprung up, and men who lay no claim to the office of the ministry, and have not been recognized as ministers in any sense, have been preaching the Gospel in Presbyterian churches. There is no provision for these men in the order of the Presbyterian Church. I shall not attempt to discuss the question whether these evangelists, ordained or unordained, ministers or laymen, are legitimate officers in the church, and are normal developments of Christian work. It is my purpose simply to call attention to the fact that lay-evangelists have no place in the Presbyterian Form of Government or Directory of Worship, and to use them is illegal and disorderly in the Presbyterian Church at the present time. It is also evident that the Westminster divines would not recognize our so-called ministerial evangelists as the evangelists of the New Testament. The Westminster divines were building their doctrine of church government on the divine right of the New Testament, and they endeavored to prove every item of their church government by one or more passages of Scripture. They could not find the evangelist among the permanent officers of the Church in the New Testament. All New

Testament scholars will agree with them. The evangelist in the modern Presbyterian Church is not *jure divino*, but *jure humano*, and is an evidence of the departure of modern Presbyterianism from the *jure divino* theory of church government.

(2). The Southern Presbyterian Church recognizes the editor as one of the four kinds of teaching elders. This official recognition of the religious editor is another departure from the *jure divino* Presbyterianism. It is true that the editors have long been unofficially recognized as ministers in the American Presbyterian Church; but so have teachers in colleges and academies, insurance agents and bankers, who for various reasons have withdrawn from the active work of the ministry and have entered into those various callings in life that are usually carried on by men who have not been ordained as ministers. In the Presbyterian Churches of Europe, the editor, the school-teacher, the college professor, and all others who are not engaged as pastors and theological teachers are regarded as no longer ministers. The American Presbyterian Church has drifted into its present unfortunate position of recognizing all men as ministers who have been ordained until they have been released from the ministry by act of the presbytery. Whatever opinion any one may hold as to the propriety of an editorial ministry, it is certain that no one can present evidences for such a ministry from the New Testament.

(3). The American Synod of 1788 substituted the term "ruling elders" for the Westminster term "other church governors," and thus took a more decided position on the difficult question of the elders of the Bible than the Westminster divines were able to take, as they were compelled to present to Parliament evidences from the Scripture for every statement they made. The

American Synod also made the elders "representatives of the people," introducing the American republican idea of the eldership in place of the Westminster theory, which represents them equally with the pastors as "appointed by Christ." It is significant that the American Synod left out the phrase "appointed by Christ" when they inserted the phrase "representatives of the people." The Westminster divines presented to Parliament a *jure divino* system of church governors, but certainly the American representative elders cannot be found either in the New Testament or the Old Testament. The elders of the American Church are not the "other church governors" of the Westminster divines; still less do they correspond with the presbyters of the New Testament appointed by Christ and His apostles to rule in His Church. The American Presbyterian elders are so different from the Biblical and the Westminster elders that they have no claim to be *jure divino*, but only *jure humano*.

(4). The Westminster divines divided their ministry of the Word into two classes, pastors and teachers. The American Synod of 1788 reduced the two classes to one, using the term bishops or pastors. The Southern Church sums up four classes in the one term, "teaching elders." The Westminster divines were cautious in their statements and adhered closely to the Biblical proofs. The American Synod, by their use of bishop and pastor as synonymous terms, were more polemic in their attitude to diocesan bishops than the Westminster divines, who were willing to recognize diocesan bishops as superintending pastors, provided they were not recognized as of a different order of ministers by divine right. The Southern Church lays undue stress upon the term elder, and by so doing, departs from every precedent in the history of Presbyterianism.

(5). The Synod of 1788 omitted the teacher from the officers of the church. This was another innovation in the Presbyterian doctrine of the ministry. It was connected with the omission of the section of the Westminster Form of Government, giving the duties of the teacher or doctor. The Southern Presbyterian Church restored the teacher to his place among ministers, but failed to assign him his special duties, because it distributed them among the four classes of its ministry, all of whom are regarded as "teaching elders." This involves a neglect of the specific functions of the pastor as distinguished from the teacher.

The Westminster divines make the following statement with reference to the doctor:

"The Scripture doth hold out the name and title of a teacher, as well as of the pastor (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). Who is also a minister of the Word, as well as the pastor, and hath power of administration of the sacraments. The Lord having given different gifts, and divers exercises according to these gifts, in the ministry of the Word (Rom. xii. 6–8; 1 Cor. xii. 1, 4–7). Though these different gifts may meet in, and accordingly be exercised by, one and the same minister (1 Cor. xiv. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Titus i. 9). Yet where be several ministers in the same congregation, they may be designed to several employments, according to the different gifts in which each of them do most excel (1 Peter iv. 10, 11). And he that doth more excel in exposition of Scripture, in teaching sound doctrine and in convincing gainsayers, than he doth in application, and is accordingly employed therein, may be called a teacher, or doctor. Nevertheless, where is but one minister in a particular congregation, he is to perform, so far as he is able, the whole work of the ministry (2 Tim. iv. 2; Titus i. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 2). A teacher, or doctor, is of most excellent use in schools and universities, as of old in the schools of the prophets, and at Jerusalem, where Gamaliel and others taught as doctors."

This Westminster doctrine of the teacher or doctor is

the same as that found in Cartwright's Church Government and the Scottish Books of Discipline. When the American Synod removed the doctor from the ordinary ministers of the Church, it made a change of immense importance, the consequences of which have not yet been fully drawn. It changed the customs and practice of the Presbyterian churches in this regard. In New England in the seventeenth century, there was an average of two ordained ministers to a church. Thomas Weld * gives an account of the three kinds of elders that prevailed there—pastors, teachers, and ruling elders. The Presbyterian churches of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin in the eighteenth century ordinarily had two ministers, whenever they were sufficiently large to sustain them; and it has been the custom of the Reformed churches of the Continent, as well as the Lutheran, to employ several ministers in large city churches. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church have pursued this policy from the earliest times. The American Synod departed, not only from the practice of the Presbyterianism of the old world, but also from the common customs of Christendom. It is probable that there was not a single church belonging to the Synod in 1788 that was able to employ more than one minister. It was exceedingly difficult to secure a sufficient number of ministers to supply even the larger and more important churches each with one minister. It was doubtless out of the experience of American Presbyterianism that they blotted out the *doctor* and inserted the *evangelist*. But they made a mistake in putting these radical changes in the Constitution that they adopted for a Church that was to spread over a continent.

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* "Brief Narration of the Churches in New England," 1645.

Long since we have had hundreds of Presbyterian churches in large cities and in large country towns, where two or more ministers have been needed to do the work of the churches. Many old churches have been divided into two or more congregations, each with its own minister, in accordance with the theory that each church should have but one minister; and there have been friction and waste, where unity in a large church would have secured greater efficiency and progress. The evil is much greater in cities where a great number of feeble organizations is the result of the system of having one minister to a church, multiplying the number of church buildings with all the vast increase of expense connected therewith. This is one of the chief reasons why churches decay and die in the poorer sections of the cities. It is impossible for a few hundred people of small means to gather in a church building and sustain a pastor, with all the incidental expenses. We must follow the example of the old world and the experience of centuries, and build great buildings that will hold several thousand worshippers, and furnish these churches with several ministers, distributing the work among them in accordance with their several gifts.

Our American system makes no provision for the variety of gifts in the Christian ministry, but goes on the theory that all ministers have all the gifts that are requisite. This theory is against the Scriptures, which tell us of a variety of gifts of ministry; and it is also against the experience of the Church in all ages, and our own every-day experience. It is a matter of common remark that in the last generation we had too much preaching of doctrine; in other words, too much of the teaching-gift in the ministry. The ministers were trained in the theological seminaries to teach, and they did

teach. The work of the pastor and the preacher, so far as it differed from the work of the teacher, was more or less neglected. The consequence was, that the people understood the Scriptures and the doctrines of the Church much better than they do at present, but were not so much stirred up to Christian activity. Instruction in the Catechism was almost universal. Lectures upon the Confession of Faith, and in exposition of the Scriptures, on Sabbath morning and at the weekly lecture, were heard gladly by the people.

But in the present generation there has been a great change. The Catechism has been largely banished from the Sunday-school, and catechizing by ministers is the exception rather than the rule. The people object to doctrinal preaching, and even expositions of the Scriptures. The teacher retires into the background, and the preacher, who exhorts and applies the Word, is in demand, and is popular. Rhetorical qualifications are required, and the question is not asked whether the minister has the Scriptural qualification, "apt to teach," but whether he will be popular. As a result, there is a surprising ignorance among intelligent Christians as to the history and doctrines of the Church, the theories of government and worship, and even the Scriptures themselves. They know about literature and science, but they know not the Bible and Christian doctrine.

The Church has never been able to get on without the doctor, and his place can never be filled by ministers with other gifts and endowments. The Church needs all kinds of ministers, and it will fare badly if it neglects any one of them. There is a place for the doctor or teacher, as well as the eloquent preacher. The strong churches ought to have them both, and must have them both if they are to grow in grace and knowledge. There

are very few men who can fulfil both offices. The gifts that make the teacher, very often prevent the man from being an eloquent preacher. The difference has to do with method of discourse, style, the choice of topics, and the aim of the speaker. There are very few who can turn from the one to the other with ease, and give each its proper proportion in his ministry.

This is an age of consolidation, centralization, and more efficient organization in business, in politics, and in education; but the Church of Jesus Christ lags behind, too conservative in its methods to be efficient. In business, little shops have largely given place to large stores, and where there were a hundred firms a few years ago in one line of business, there are now ten; and there are many instances in which all the business has come to a head in the control of one mind. But the Christian Church goes on in the policy of splitting up into little, half-starved, feeble detachments. An army in these days marches in great hosts, a vast organism. But the army of the Lord is broken up into little companies, without any efficient organization or guidance.

We ought to have in mind the cathedral establishments of the Old World, and great Protestant organizations, such as Spurgeon's tabernacle in London, which are centres of religious life to vast communities. The problem of preaching the Gospel to the poor in the great cities will never be solved except in some such way. Great preachers are few in number. But some may be found who can preach to several thousand people as easily as to several hundred. Such a man, sustained by a band of ministers, some with teaching gifts, some with pastoral gifts, some with gifts of eloquence for exhortation, and some with executive gifts for organizing Christian work, would do an amount of good for Christ and

His cause that no man can do under present conditions. There is great value in consolidation and in large organizations in the Church, as well as in the State and in business life. In such a Church the doctor would have his place and importance, and would co-operate with all other arms of the service of the Lord in the common work of advancing the kingdom of God in the world.

THE PRESBYTERY.

A presbytery is a body of presbyters or elders, however small or great. All ecclesiastical courts, from the highest to the lowest, are presbyteries. Usage may give the term to one body rather than to another; but in fact, it belongs to them all, and it is this theory of government that gives the Presbyterian Church its name.

The American presbytery was organized in the spring of 1706, in the city of Philadelphia, by three pastors and four missionaries. It was essentially a "*meeting of ministers*," as Francis Makemie describes it, "for ministerial exercise," "to consult the most proper measures for advancing religion and propagating Christianity." * It did not include all the ministers of the Presbyterian faith and order; but the presbytery grew as other ministers and congregations united with it. It did not claim any jurisdiction except over those who voluntarily joined it. There were many ministers and churches that remained independent. The Presbyterianism of America was not homogeneous. There were English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, French, German, Dutch, and Swiss Presbyterians, and it seems to have been the design of Providence that these should unite only by degrees,

* See Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," p. 142.

after many generations of experience in a condition of separation. This coexistence of different Presbyterian bodies within the same territory without organic union, has been a prominent feature of American Presbyterianism from the beginning.

In 1716 the presbytery divided itself "into subordinate meetings or presbyteries," three in number, and invited the Puritan ministers on Long Island to unite with them and make a fourth presbytery; and so the Synod of Philadelphia was constituted.

In 1741 the Synod of Philadelphia was broken in twain by an unhappy contest, and two rival synods were constituted, the Synod of New York and the Synod of Philadelphia. These united in 1758 as the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. In 1788 this synod divided itself into four synods, and constituted a General Assembly. The Constitution gives the accompanying doctrine of Presbyterian government, which we place alongside of the similar doctrine of the Westminster Form of Church Government. (See next page.)

The comparison shows some very striking differences. The Westminster form is not as detailed as the American form—for these details were given in special ecclesiastical legislation in the English and Scotch Churches.

(1). The American Synod substituted the term "*expedient*" for the Westminster "*lawful*," and added to the phrase "agreeable to the Scripture," "*and the practice of the primitive Christians.*" This shows a virtual abandonment of the doctrine of Presbyterian government by *divine right*, or *law*, and the basing of the doctrine on the principle of *expediency*, which was enforced not merely by an appeal to Scripture, which alone satisfied the Westminster divines, but by an appeal to *the practice of the primitive Christians.* I doubt whether

WESTMINSTER.	AMERICAN.
It is lawful, and agreeable to the Word of God, that the Church be governed by several sorts of assemblies, which are Congregational, Classical, and Synodical.	We hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies.
The ruling officers of a particular congregation have power, authoritatively, to call before them any member of the congregation, as they shall see just occasion.	The church session consists of the pastor or pastors, and ruling elders, of a particular congregation.
A Presbytery consisteth of ministers of the Word, and such other publick officers as are agreeable to and warranted by the Word of God, to be the Church-governors, to join with the ministers in the government of the Church.	A presbytery consists of all the ministers, and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district.
Synodical assemblies may lawfully be of several sorts, as provincial, national, and œcumenical.	A synod is a convention of the bishops and elders within a larger district, including at least three presbyteries.
It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God, that there be a subordination of Congregational, Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies, for the government of the Church.	The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery.

the Westminster divines would have been so positive here as our American Synod. It would be rather difficult to establish any such elaborate presbyterial government among primitive Christians as *synodical* assemblies.

(2). We notice the abandonment by the American Synod of the term "*classical*" assemblies, and the substitution of the term *presbyterial*. The term *presbytery* is a Scotch term. The Churches of the Continent are followed by the Reformed Churches in America in the use of the term *classis*. This was the term used by the Westminster divines when they organized the Provincial Assembly of London with twelve classes, in 1647. It is true the term presbytery appears in the Westminster Form given above, but this was as a variant of their usual term classis, and it was doubtless to please the Scottish commissioners. We think that the term classis is a better one for several reasons: (*a*). It is inappropriate to take the term *presbytery*, which belongs properly to all of these bodies from the highest to the lowest, and use it for one of them. It has had the unfortunate effect that presbyteries in Scotland and America have had an exaggerated idea of their own importance, as if they were the fountain of Presbyterian government, when really they are simply an intermediate body with the provincial synod between the fundamental body, the congregational presbytery (or session), and the culminating body, the national synod (or General Assembly). In the history of Presbyterianism, especially in America, the presbytery has too often lorded it over the congregation in an un-presbyterian manner, and has even ventured to regard the General Assembly as its creature, on a theory of Presbyterianism that corresponds with that of State's rights in the nation. (*b*). In

view of a future union with the Reformed bodies, we shall have to resume the more appropriate name classis, which is common to the Presbyterian and Reformed world. We cannot expect them to take a term which is peculiar to Scotch Presbyterianism.

(3). The classical presbytery in American Presbyterianism is a very peculiar body in the Presbyterian world. According to the Westminster model, it consists of *ministers of the Word* and *other Church governors;* according to the American Synod, it was to consist of "ALL the ministers and *one ruling elder* from each congregation within a certain district." There are several important changes here. The little word "*all*" makes a vast difference. The Westminster divines knew of only two kinds of ministers of the Word—namely, pastors and doctors. These pastors were pastors of churches, and these doctors were either associated with them in the ministry of particular congregations, and so members of the congregational presbytery, or else were appointed to teach in institutions of learning. The Westminster divines did not recognize evangelists as a class of ministers. They held that this class disappeared with the apostles and prophets in apostolic times. Therefore the ministerial members of presbytery were all members of congregational presbyteries, with the exception of the theological professors in the universities.

The ministers of the Word were no less representatives of the parochial presbyteries than the elders. The American presbytery, however, was organized with only *three* pastors and four missionaries without charge, and was really a meeting of ministers, to which the elders, as representatives of the congregations, were appended. It would seem that congregations did not send elders unless their ministers went to presbytery; for in 1716 the

question was raised whether an elder might sit in the absence of his minister, and it was carried in the affirmative. This American custom of regarding all ordained ministers as members of presbytery, whether attached to congregations or not, has continued until the present time. It was put in the constitution by the little word "*all.*" When now we consider the immense number of ministers who have been, and still continue to be, evangelists in the peculiarly American sense of the word, and how large a number of stated supplies and chapel missionaries we have who are not pastors; and then again observe that the doctor has no place in the congregational presbyteries; we see very clearly that an American presbytery is a very different presbytery from a Westminster presbytery, or a presbytery in any of the Presbyterian churches of the Old World.

PRESBYTERIAN WORSHIP.

There have been great changes in the mode of worship in Presbyterian churches since the Westminster Assembly. The worship of God in all Christian churches is essentially the same, embracing the reading of the Word of God, prayer, songs of praise, the sacraments, and preaching of the Gospel. The differences consist in the order of worship, the ceremonies, the sacred times, and those who conduct the services. In the conflicts of Puritanism with Prelacy in Great Britain, the Presbyterians were led to emphasize the spirituality of worship, and to oppose the imposition of liturgies, ceremonies, and a priesthood. On the other hand, the prelatical party laid too much stress upon holy days, ceremonies, and liturgies. In the Church of England, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was the most essential thing in public worship. In this it agreed with the Lutheran,

Roman Catholic, and Greek Churches. But the Puritans made the preaching of the Word of God the most essential thing, and so the pulpit took the place of the altar in Presbyterian churches, and the sermon became the centre about which prayers and praise and the reading of the Scriptures were grouped, to which was appended the observance of the Lord's Supper. If it has been a fault of the Episcopal churches that they have neglected *the sermon*, it has been a fault of Presbyterian churches that they have neglected *the other parts of public worship*. The tendency in the Presbyterian Church has been from bad to worse since the Westminster Assembly. One may trace this descent by comparing the Directory of Worship in its successive revisions with the worship of Presbyterian congregations in our day. The American Presbyterian churches are drifting toward an uncertain future. The public worship in many of our Presbyterian churches is so different from the Directory, that our Presbyterian fathers could not recognize it as Presbyterian; and in many respects the American Episcopal churches are more conformed to the Westminster ideal than their Presbyterian neighbors.

It is instructive to compare the *order of worship* of the Westminster Directory with that of the Directory for the American Presbyterian Church. (See next page.)

Here several changes attract attention:

(1). The *collection* is inserted immediately before the benediction. The custom in the Presbyterian churches of Great Britain is to take up the collection at the door of the church, and thus it is no part of the order of worship. The American Directory gives it a place in the order of worship. But it is only within a few years that our churches have risen to the conception that giving is itself an act of worship. Accordingly the Church has

WESTMINSTER.	AMERICAN.
(1). Prayer of invocation.	Prayer of invocation.
(2). Reading of Scriptures.	Reading of Scriptures.
(3). Psalm.	Psalm or hymn.
(4). Prayer, (*a*) confession, (*b*) petitions, (*c*) intercession, (*d*) consecration.	Prayer, (*a*) adoration, (*b*) thanksgiving, (*c*) confession, (*d*) petitions, (*e*) pleading, (*f*) intercession.
(5). Sermon.	Sermon.
(6). Prayer, (*a*) thanksgiving, (*b*) special petitions.	Prayer, special petitions.
(7). Lord's Prayer.	Psalm.
(8). Psalm.	Collection.
(9). Blessing.	Benediction.

added to the Directory: "Of the worship of God with our substance" (chap. vi.). The offerings of the people are to be consecrated by prayer. This is the greatest improvement that the Presbyterian Church has yet made in the matter of worship.

(2). The Westminster Directory provided for the singing of two *psalms*. The American Church, after a long and severe contest, introduced the singing of *hymns* in addition to the psalms. This is provided for in our Directory, in the permission to use a hymn instead of a psalm in the first exercise of singing. The churches have continued to improve in sacred music, so that there are few churches that do not sing at least three times in the course of the service. Many of our churches have additional pieces of sacred song at the beginning of the service, and in connection with the collection of the offer-

ings. The service of song has been improved still further by the use of organs and other musical instruments and trained singers. But with these improvements other changes have come of a more doubtful character. One of these is the custom of beginning worship with a doxology, which is contrary to the theory of the order of worship in both Directories. Another is the neglect of the psalms, and an almost exclusive use of hymns in our churches. The older hymn-books gave the entire Psalter by itself, but the majority of our modern hymn-books give only a portion of the psalms, and these are buried in the midst of a much greater number of hymns, and they are seldom used. Many Presbyterian churches use the Psalter for responsive readings. The Psalter ought to be used regularly as an essential part of the service of song. I see no other way of regaining lost ground than by introducing the chanting of the psalms as a regular part of our worship.' The American Presbyterian Church has departed so far from the Westminster Directory and its own Directory in this matter of song, that all uniformity of worship has disappeared. The official hymn-book of the Church has been driven from the field by private collections, some of which are much better. Every congregation does what seems right in its own eyes, and the churches are in all stages of advancement and of deterioration in their worship. Our Presbyterian fathers did not apprehend the importance of this subject, and the churches have done well to improve upon their tasteless notions of psalm-singing. But we ought to aim at something that is high and noble, and in accordance with the genius of Presbyterianism, and we should advance toward it as a Church. The present situation is abnormal and chaotic.

(3). The American Directory made a change in the

order of topics of prayer. The Westminster Directory agrees with the practice of all the Reformed Churches in beginning the long prayer with confession of sin and petition for pardon. This was followed by petition for the Holy Spirit and for sanctification. The next topic was intercession, and the prayer concludes with consecration. Thanksgiving comes in the prayer after sermon. But the American Directory removed the thanksgiving from the closing prayer, and put it after adoration in the long prayer. This gave the long prayer, already too long, greater length by the addition of two more topics, and made it disproportionate and burdensome in the morning worship. The American Directory made an improvement when it added the topic *pleading* after petition, and before intercession; but it made two blunders in omitting *consecration* and the *Lord's Prayer*. The Westminster Directory begins the topic of *consecration* in the following admirable manner:

"And, with confidence of his mercy to his whole Church, and the acceptance of our persons through the merits and mediation of our High-Priest, the Lord Jesus, to profess that it is the desire of our soules to have fellowship with God in the reverent and conscionable use of his holy Ordinances; and to that purpose to pray earnestly for his grace."

This is a part of prayer which is commonly neglected by our ministers.

The Westminster Directory, in connection with the prayer after sermon, says:

"And because the Prayer which Christ taught his Disciples is not only a Patern of Prayer, but itself a most comprehensive Prayer, we recommend it also to be used in the Prayers of the Church."

It is unfortunate that this was left out of the American Directory, for it has permitted the practice of a few

Presbyterian ministers, who refuse to use the Lord's Prayer in public worship on the ground of its liturgical character.

(4). The Westminster Directory for prayer is much fuller than the American Directory; so full indeed that it gives a minister not only the order of topics of prayer, but the very words that are most appropriate to use in the variety of matters that come under these topics. On this account, it is much more helpful than the American Directory to the young minister. The American Synod made a mistake when they cut it down so materially. They left out some of the most important matters. One omission seems to have been connected with a change of doctrine. The Westminster Directory directs the minister

"to pray for the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all nations, for the conversion of the Jews, the fullnesse of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and the hastning of the second coming of our Lord."

This petition is in accordance with the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, and it is one of the most important to be made in public worship, and yet it was blotted out by the American Synod in 1788. The reasons for doing it were because, (*a*), they had lost the Westminster conception of a world-wide church and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the Westminster sense of the duty of preaching the Gospel to all nations. It is sometimes represented that the Westminster divines were at fault in this particular. This is a mistake. They were the principal organizers of the first missionary society in Great Britain, to aid John Eliot and others in missions for the American Indians.* They

* See Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," p. 99.

showed their interest by this petition of their Directory. The American Synod showed their lack of interest by removing it. (*b*). Another reason was that the American Synod had changed the Westminster doctrine of the Second Advent. The Westminster divines believed with the ancient Church and the Reformers that the advent of Christ was at hand, and that it was their duty to watch for it and pray for it. But it is probable that the American Synod had adopted the modern theory that a millennium was to precede the Advent, and therefore there was no interest in the prayer for the conversion of the Jews and for the Advent itself. They allowed these Westminster doctrines to remain in the Confession and Catechisms, which they could accept in accordance with the generous American terms of subscription; but they were unwilling to leave these doctrines in the forms for public prayer to be used on every Sabbath of the year.

The Directory does not bind the ministers to the use of this order of topics, but grants him liberty to vary them; and the ministers certainly make greater use of their *liberty* than they do of the *order*. Liberty is not license. It was designed that the *order* should be followed, unless there were occasional reasons to change it. But we apprehend that the order of topics in public prayer has very little practical influence upon our ministers. Many of them seem to forget that the prayers of the public service are *common* prayer; that they are to lead their people in devotion, and that their private feelings have no place there. Many ministers have the notion that the prayers are to be framed to suit the sermon, so as to give the theme for the day. Accordingly, the topics of common prayer are omitted, and the long prayer is really an introduction to the ser-

mon. But the prayers of the people are *their* prayers, and the minister is simply their leader. None of the topics of prayer should be omitted without strong and special reasons. A reform is needed in Presbyterian prayers. I doubt whether much can be accomplished in this direction without a partial and voluntary Liturgy.

(5). In Reading the Scriptures, there have also been very important changes. The Westminster Directory gives the following:

"How large a portion shall be read at once, is left to the wisdom of the Minister; But it is convenient, that ordinarily one Chapter of each Testament be read at every meeting; and sometimes more, where the Chapter be short, or the coherence of the matter requireth it. It is requisite that all the Canonical Books be read over in order, that the people may be better acquainted with the whole body of the Scriptures: and ordinarily, where the Reading in either Testament endeth on one Lord's day, it is to begin the next."

This was reduced in the American Directory to the following:

"How large a portion shall be read at once, is left to the discretion of every minister: however, in each service, he ought to read, at least, one chapter; and more, when the chapters are short, or the connection requires it."

Here are two changes: (*a*), The reduction of the minimum amount from one chapter of each Testament to one chapter of the Bible; (*b*), the omission of the provision for reading the entire Bible before the congregation. The latter provision is one of great importance, and yet it is not given by the Westminster divines in the best form. There are considerable portions of the Scriptures that are not suited for public reading. But the greater part of the Bible is suited for public worship, and it ought to be read to the congregation. I once heard an Anglican bishop in a sermon charge Presbyterians

with neglecting the public reading of the Scripture. I boiled with indignation at the time, but subsequent reflection convinced me that he was correct. The Episcopal churches secure the full reading of the most important parts of Scripture in the lessons for the ecclesiastical year. But the reading of the Scriptures in Presbyterian churches is left to the minister, who selects his passages to suit his sermon, and the consequence is that only a small portion of the Scriptures ever comes before the congregation in the public reading.

(6). The Westminster Directory gives an appendix "touching days and places for public worship," and it takes the position that "Festival days, vulgarly called *Holy-days*, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued." The American Synod happily blotted this out. There is nothing in our Directory to forbid the observance of the holy-days of the Christian year, and our churches in increasing numbers are observing the most important of them, such as Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter. The Westminster divines were not as wise in this as they were in most matters of faith and practice. The experience of the Christian world is more valuable. The Presbyterian Churches of America should follow the Presbyterian Churches of the continent of Europe and keep the Christian year.

(7). The Westminster divines laid great stress upon Fasting, both in the Confession and the Directory. The Directory gives full instruction for public fast days, and the Form of Government prescribes fasting in connection with ordination of ministers. The American Directory, in chap. xiv., retains the rules for fasting in a shortened form. Our Presbyterian fathers were as zealous for fasting as their Anglican rivals, but the American Presbyterians of our day seem to have abandoned fasting altogether.

The American Synod was radical in the changes it introduced in the Form of Government and Directory of Worship, departing from the Westminster Symbols and the Presbyterian Churches of Europe in many important respects. This spirit of freedom and enterprise and fearless progress in our American Presbyterianism of one hundred years ago is in striking contrast with the traditionalism and conservatism of later times. The American Presbyterian Church has leaned heavily upon the work of the Synod of 1788, and has not carried on the work that they so well began. The Synod of 1788 adapted the Presbyterian forms of government and worship, that had been brought from the Old World, to the circumstances of the New World. Their successors have ever been reluctant to follow their example, and have thought rather of adapting the American people and the circumstances of the country to the Presbyterian Constitution. That little band of 177 ministers had no idea of establishing a Constitution for all time. They opened a way for the revisions that they certainly expected. They did not hesitate to go in the face of the Westminster divines and the experience of the Presbyterianism of Europe. They had no such conceit as to suppose that a great Church of thousands of ministers would regard their work as final. They did a brave and noble act when they tried to adapt these Westminster documents to the circumstances of the infant Republic. Their adaptations were remarkably farsighted and excellent, but they did not foresee all that has taken place in the last hundred years, and they could not provide for the changed circumstances. Their work was thus far defective. On the other hand, they made mistakes in some of their changes. The older documents were better in not a few cases. The changes were perhaps necessary in the infancy of the Republic and of our Church.

But now that the nation and the Church have become older, the circumstances have become more like those of the Presbyterian Churches of Europe, and the older documents have in some respects become more suitable than the revisions.

The American Presbyterian Church cannot afford to remain in bondage to the Constitution of 1788. It has in many respects outgrown it. Those are the true American Presbyterians who have the *spirit* of the Synod of 1788, rather than those who insist upon adhering rigidly to the *forms* they have given us. We should not hesitate to follow their example and revise the Constitution of 1788, making it more worthy of the Church of our day and the circumstances in which we are now placed.

RELIGION AND MORALS.

A study of the structure of the Westminster doctrinal symbols and an outline of their contents reveals another important change in the attitude of modern Presbyterianism. These standards are grouped about the three historic documents—the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments—expressing religion, doctrine, and morals, the three great divisions of systematic theology. The Westminster symbols deal with these topics as follows:

	CONFESSION	LARGER CATECHISM.	SHORTER CATECHISM.
(1) Doctrine of the Scriptures	10 Sects.	11 Quests.	7 Quests.
(2) Doctrines of Faith	82 "	85 "	39 "
(3) Morals	28 "	61 "	45 "
(4) Religion	52 "	39 "	16 "
Total	172 Sects.	196 Quests.	107 Quests.

The Confession lays the greatest stress upon doctrines of faith. This is but natural in view of the fact that the Directory of Worship and Form of Government dealt with the other departments. The Larger Catechism increases the amount of material under the head of morals, due to the elaborate exposition of the Ten Commands under the influence of Antony Tuckney. In the Shorter Catechism morals becomes the most important section. The doctrine of the Scriptures is fundamental in all the documents.

It is clear from this table that the current theology is not justified in laying so much stress upon doctrines of faith, and so little stress upon religion and morals. The theology of the Presbyterian Church long ago abandoned the proportions of the Westminster symbols and overrated the importance of doctrines in comparison with religion and morals. The Westminster divines themselves are not without blame here. The natural order of treatment is religion, doctrines of faith, and morals.

As Henry B. Smith says:

"(*a*) Logically, religion is first: for the facts must precede the science of them. (*b*) Psychologically, religion is first: for the consciousness must precede the reflection upon it. (*c*) Historically, religion is always first. Yet (*d*) a *true* religion and a true theology are, in advanced culture, inseparable. True religion cannot be preserved without a true theology; nor can there be a vital theology without a vital religious experience." *

The first thing should be the religious life itself as expressed in the "Lord's Prayer," then the Creed giving the articles of Faith, and the whole should conclude with the Ten Commands as a guide to a holy life. The

* "Introduction to Christian Theology," p. 55. N. Y.: A. C. Armstrong.

faulty order of the Westminster symbols was the occasion of the neglect of religion and morals and the undue exaltation of dogma in Presbyterian circles. For it is a weakness of human nature to give chief attention to those things that come first. There are few minds that will sustain their interest to the end or give proportionate attention to the whole of any subject.

It is also noteworthy that the Catechisms divide themselves into two parts rather than three in the answer to the question, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" "A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." This answer, taken strictly, embraces the whole department of Christian worship and the means of grace under the head of duty to God. This is a serious fault. Doubtless it is our duty to worship God and use the means of grace for our salvation. But it is also our duty to believe in God and maintain sound doctrine. Worship is something more than duty to God: it is an unspeakable privilege, an expression of love and gratitude to our God and Saviour prior in the experience of most Christians to any sense of moral obligation. It is exceedingly unfortunate that the worship of God and the use of the sacraments have been directed in so many persons and churches by the sense of duty, and that Christian love has been overwhelmed by law. When duty is discriminated from faith, it is also necessary to distinguish religion also. For religion is prior in the order of experience. The religious life precedes doctrines of faith and the ethical precepts that govern it. Lutheran and Reformed scholasticism, and the mechanical systems that scholasticism engendered, crushed the religious spirit and produced a dead orthodoxy. It is one of the chief merits of Schleiermacher that he

began the work of reconstructing Christian theology by unfolding the richness and fulness of vital religion as prior to all creeds and ethical systems however simple.

Religion is a life before it is a faith and gains a character. It is a life of union with the living God, of communion with the living Messiah, of worship of the adorable Trinity. When this living religion is absent, dry scholastic creeds and cold ethical systems are of little value for the reformation of the individual, the nation, or the world. It is the life of religion that animates the creed with Christian experience and makes Christian ethics glow with holy love.

Doubtless there are Christian churches that lay too little stress upon doctrines of faith, but the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches have not this defect; they err in the neglect of the religious element; they are at present marked by the prevalent low views of the Church and its sacraments, and loose views and practices in public worship. These Churches have declined from the high views of their own standards. They are so far behind, that progress in theology consists for them in first rising to the height of the Westminster symbols, and then, from these as a basis, rising to something still higher. It may be that Episcopalians and other liturgical churches lay too much stress upon the order of worship, but Presbyterians over-emphasize the order of the divine decrees and the order of salvation. It is important for each denomination to recognize its defects and overcome them. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists are behind in the whole department of religion; Episcopalians and Methodists in the department of doctrines of Faith; and all churches are sadly behind in morals. Let there be an advance along the whole

line, and these mistaken attitudes of the traditional Orthodoxy will be abandoned, the barriers of Christian union will be removed, sectarianism and intolerance will vanish away, and the Church of Christ will enjoy its ideal visible unity.

CHAPTER IV.

SHIFTING.

IT is a very significant sign of the times that Protestant divines have so generally undermined the principles of the Reformation. The three great principles of the Reformation were—(1), The sole authority of the Holy Scriptures; (2), Justification by faith alone; and (3), Salvation by the divine grace alone. These three principles have all been changed by modern divines in the interests of other dogmas. We shall limit ourselves in this chapter to the principle of the sole authority of the Scriptures.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The Westminster doctrine of the Scriptures is an admirable doctrine. It corresponds with the statements of the Scriptures themselves, as well as with the faith of the Reformation. The advance in the science of Biblical criticism in recent times has brought evangelical critics into entire sympathy with it. It corresponds with the facts of the case and the results of a scientific study of the Bible. They accept the Confession of Faith, and build upon it, and use it to destroy the false doctrines that dogmaticians have taught in its place. These false doctrines are partly extra-confessional, sharpening the definitions of the Westminster symbols by undue refinements and assumed logical deductions, such as, (*a*) the addition of the adjective

verbal to inspiration, and (*b*) the use of the term *inerrancy* with reference to the entire body of the Scriptures. They are chiefly contra-confessional, substituting false doctrines for the real faith of the Church in these two particulars, (*c*) basing the authority of the Scriptures upon the *testimony of the ancient Church*, and (*d*) making the inspiration of the Scriptures depend upon their supposed *human authors*. We shall briefly consider each one of these errors.

VERBAL INSPIRATION.

The late Dr. A. A. Hodge stated * that "the Presbyterian Church, in unison with all evangelical Christians, teaches that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, having been given by the immediate and plenary inspiration of God, are both in meaning and verbal expression the word of God to man." This statement is correct except in the phrase "and verbal expression," which is entirely false. Dr. Hodge had no authority to define the faith of the Presbyterian Church and of evangelical Christians. The faith of the Church is contained in the creeds; and no confession of faith or catechism of recognized standing in the Reformed or Lutheran Church, teaches that the Scriptures are inspired in their verbal expression.

Dr. Hodge and Dr. Warfield also stated † that "the line can never rationally be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture." This is the private opinion of these gentlemen, but it is not the official doctrine of the Church. Other scholars, wiser and greater than they,

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* "Presbyterian Doctrine Briefly Stated," p. 8, Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

† *Presbyterian Review*, vol. ii., p. 235.

deny it and the creeds do not affirm it. It is a narrowing and sharpening of the broader Westminster definition. These divines claim that their view is the only rational one. But we affirm that it is no more rational than it is confessional or Biblical. Their reasoning has advanced to verbal inspiration. They cannot halt in their logic, but must accept the consequences. Verbal inspiration makes the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek documents as they came from the hands of their writers, the only inspired Word of God. If the line cannot be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture, we cannot separate the inspired thoughts from the inspired words,—we cannot transfer the inspired thoughts into other words. No version, however excellent, can contain the inspired Word of God. Protestants claim that no version can be so inspired as the originals, because it is impossible to perfectly translate the inspired thought from one set of words into another set of words, and therefore in all disputes we must go to the original texts. But all true Protestants believe that the inspired thought may be transferred into the translations of the Scriptures, which alone the people and the majority of their teachers are able to use. A faithful translation does transfer the inspired thought, and those translations are most faithful that transfer the thought into new words rather than those that aim at verbal correspondence. The theory of verbal inspiration cannot admit inspired thoughts in other than inspired words. It therefore results in the denial that there are inspired thoughts in the English Bible. It cuts off the Christian people from the real word of God and gives them a human substitute. It cuts off the most of the advocates of this theory themselves, for it is one of their characteristics that they prefer the *a priori* work of dogmatic

theology to the more difficult and detailed work of Greek and Hebrew exegesis. Who would trust the majority of the dogmatic divines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in nice points of Biblical criticism or interpretation? Verbal inspiration makes Biblical critics the only real priests of the Bible, the mediators of the divine mysteries, who alone have real access to the originals. And yet these disciples of verbal inspiration are the very ones who are sounding the alarm that the critics are destroying the Bible. The critics are destroying the scholastic theory of verbal inspiration, but they are bringing the Biblical doctrine of plenary inspiration into its true place and importance.

We shall give the opinions of a few Presbyterians of the seventeenth century on this subject, in order to show how far modern divines have departed from the Westminster doctrine of the Bible.

"All language or writing is but the vessel, the symbol, or declaration of the rule, not the rule itself. It is a certain form or means by which the divine truth cometh unto us, as things are contained in words, and because the doctrine and matter of the text is not made unto one, but by words and a language which I understand; therefore I say, the Scripture in English is the rule and ground of my faith, and whereupon I relying have not a humane, but a divine authority for my faith." *

"For it is not the shell of the words, but the kernel of the matter which commends itself to the consciences of men, and that is the same in all languages. The Scriptures in English, no less than in Hebrew or Greek, display its lustre and exert its power and discover the character of its divine original." †

"I could easily demonstrate that the Scripture calls the originall translated *Scripture* and not without just reason, for the Scripture stands not *in cortice verborum* but in *medulla sensus*, its the same wine in this vessel which was drawn out of that. Transla-

* William Lyford, "Plain Man's Sense Exercised," etc., p. 49.

† Matthew Poole, "Blow at the Root," London, 1679, p. 234.

tions are but vessels or taps (as I may call them) to set Scriptures abroach; as for faults and errours in that translation, if that argument be able to batter and make a breach, let it but have rope enough, and it will make as great a breach in the Hebrew, for when you come to find that there are *variae lectiones*, and that in the margent truer than that in the text, as in that famous place, Ps. xxii. 17, or shall question the true pointing or printing of the originall, whither will not this wild argument run away with you, until you come to find the *very original* written by the prophets own hand or by the hand of some amanuensis infallibly directed and guided; The *Scriptures exprest in English are the Word of God.* The deficiency of exact translation of this or that particular *word* doth not invalidate the *canon* or bodie of the Scriptures." *

"Now, what shall a poor unlearned Christian do, if he hath nothing to rest his poore soul on? The originals he understands not; if he did, the first copies are not to be had; he cannot tell whether the Hebrew or Greek copies be the right Hebrew or the right Greek, or that which is said to be the meaning of the Hebrew or Greek, but as men tell us, who are not prophets and may mistake. Besides, the transcribers were men and might err. These considerations let in Atheisme like a flood." †

"The Scriptures in themselves are a Lanthorn rather than a Light; they shine, indeed, but it is *alieno lumine;* it is not their own, but a borrowed light. It is God which is the true light that shines to us in the Scriptures; and they have no other light in them, but as they represent to us somewhat of God, and as they exhibit and hold forth God to us, who is the true light that 'enlighteneth every man that comes into the world.' It is a light, then, as it represents God unto us, who is the original light. It transmits some rays; some beams of the divine nature; but they are refracted, or else we should not be able to behold them. They lose much of their original lustre by passing through this medium, and appear not so glorious to us as they are in themselves. They represent God's simplicity obliquated and refracted, by reason of many inadequate conceptions; God condescend-

* Richard Vines, "Common's Sermon, March 10, 1646," p. 68.

† Rich. Capel, "Remains," London, 1658.

ing to the weakness of our capacity to speak to us in our own dialect."*

"The testimonie of the Spirit doth not teach or assure us of the Letters, syllables, or severall words of holy Scripture, which are onely as a vessell, to carry and convey that heavenly light unto us, but it doth seale in our hearts the saving truth contained in those sacred writings into what language soever they be translated."†

INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is claimed by President Patton that inerrancy of Scripture is essential to the inspiration of the Scriptures,‡ and Doctors Hodge and Warfield go so far as to say that "a proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine, but the Scripture's claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims."§

It is admitted that there are errors in the present text of Scripture, but it is claimed that there could have been no errors in the original documents. But how do we know this? We have not the originals and can never get at them. Biblical criticism brings us closer to the originals, but does not remove the errors. It is in accordance with sound logic and scientific methods to form our conception of the original documents from the best documents that we have. The presumption, therefore, in regard to errors in the best texts, is that they were also in the original documents. It is sheer assumption to claim that the original documents were inerrant. No one can be persuaded to believe in the inerrancy of Scripture,

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* John Wallis, "Sermons," Lond., 1791, pp. 127–8.

† John Ball's "Short Treatise, contayning all the Principall Grounds of Christian Religion," pp. 30–31. Eleventh Impression, London, 1637.

‡ *Presbyterian Review*, vol. iv., p. 363.

§ *Presbyterian Review*, vol. ii., p. 245.

except by *a priori* considerations from the elaboration of the doctrine of verbal inspiration.

It is conceded that many of the ablest and choicest spirits of modern times, such as Van Oosterzee, Tholuck, Neander, Stier, Lange, and Dorner, admit "errors and inaccuracies in matters of subordinate importance." * Indeed theological scholarship in Europe is overwhelmingly on the side of these distinguished divines. And yet, Doctors Hodge and Warfield do not hesitate to say:

> "Nevertheless, the historical faith of the Church has always been, that all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle are without any error, when the *ipsissima verba* of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense." †

This statement of these recent divines is contrary to the facts of the case, for—(1). The historic faith of the Church is to be found in the official symbolical books and nowhere else. None of these symbols state that the "*ipsissima verba* of the original autographs are without error."

(2). It is well known that the great Reformers recognized errors in the Scriptures and did not hold to the inerrancy of the original autographs.‡ Are these Princeton divines entitled to pronounce Luther and Calvin heterodox, and to define the faith of the universal Church?

(3). The Westminster divines did not teach the inerrancy of the original autographs.

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* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. ii., p. 244.

† *Presbyterian Review*, vol. ii., p. 238.

‡ See Briggs' "Biblical Study," p. 141.

The saintly Rutherford thus expresses their views:

"Now, if we have no better warrant, *that the books of the Old and New Testament, that we now have, to wit, the originall of Hebrew and Greek and translations are the word of God, then that which is made of the credit of the authority and learning of men*, then must all our comfort of beleeving be grounded upon this man's, and this man's Grammar and skill, in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latine*, *English*, and he is not infallible in any of these. And must our *lively hope* be bottomed on *men's credit and learning?* Then for anything we know on the contrary, we have but dreams, opinions, and at best, man's word, for the word of God, and how is the *word of Prophesie a more sure word;* for these were written and translated prophesies, of which *Peter* speaketh; *Mr. Goodwin* and *Libertines*, who put heaven and Christ, and the *lively hope* of our inheritance, to the conjectures of doubting *Scepticks* could well reply to *Peter*, *the word of prophesie cannot be sure; for we have no certainty that the Scriptures* of the Prophets, *of the Old and New Testament, which we have either Hebrew or Greek copies of, are the word of God*, but undoubtedly Christ appealeth to the Scriptures as to the onely Judge of that controversie, between him and the *Jewes, whether the Son of Mary was the eternall Son of God, and the Saviour of the world*, he supposed the written Scriptures which came through the hands of fallible Printers and Translatours, and were copies at the second, if not at the twentieth hand from the first copy of *Moses* and the Prophets, and so were written by sinfull men, who might have miswritten and corrupted the Scripture, yet to be a judge and a rule of faith, and fit to determine that controversie and all others, and a Judge *de facto*, and actually preserved by a divine hand from errours, mistakes and corruptions, else Christ might, in that, appealed to a lying Judge, and a corrupt and uncertaine witnesse; and though there be errours of number, genealogies, etc., of writing in the Scripture, as written or printed, yet we hold providence watcheth so over it, that in the body of articles of faith, and necessary truths, we are certaine with the certainty of faith, it is that same very word of God, having the same speciall operations *of enlightning the eyes, converting the soule, making wise the simple*, as being lively, *sharper than a two-edged sword*, full of divinity, life, majesty, power, simplicity, wisdome, cer-

tainty, etc., which the Prophets of old, and the writings of the Evangelists, and Apostles had."*

Richard Baxter was the leading Presbyterian of his time. He knew what he was about in his warning:

"And here I must tell you a great and needful truth, which . . . . Christians fearing to confess, by overdoing tempt men to Infidelity. The Scripture is like a man's body, where some parts are but for the preservation of the rest, and may be maimed without death: The sense is the soul of the Scripture; and the letters but the body, or vehicle. The doctrine of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is the vital part, and Christianity itself. The Old Testament letter (written as we have it about Ezra's time) is that vehicle which is as imperfect as the Revelation of these times was: But as after Christ's incarnation and ascension, the Spirit was more abundantly given, and the Revelation more perfect and sealed, so the doctrine is more full and the vehicle or body, that is, the words are less imperfect and more sure to us; so that he that doubteth of the truth of some words in the Old Testament, or of some circumstances in the New, hath no reason therefore to doubt of the Christian religion, of which these writings are but the vehicle or body, sufficient to ascertain us of the truth of the History and Doctrine."†

The modern Presbyterian Church will hesitate a long time before they rule out Baxter and Rutherford from orthodoxy in the interests of a new theory of the inerrancy of Scripture.

The doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture not only comes into conflict with the historical faith of the Church, but it is also in conflict with Biblical criticism. We shall not attempt to array the line of supposed errors in the Scriptures over against the theory of the

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* Samuel Rutherford, "A Free Disputation against pretended Liberty of Conscience," London, 1649, pp. 365–6.

† "The Catechising of Families," 1683, p. 36.

inerrancy of the Scripture. These dogmaticians give up their case if we can show a single error. It seems to me that no candid mind without invincible dogmatic prepossessions, can doubt that there is an error of citation in Matt. xxvii. 9, that goes back to the original autograph. A passage is cited from Jeremiah that belongs in Zechariah. Dr. Warfield tries hard to overcome this error by three "plausible" theories.* They may seem plausible to Dr. Warfield, the advocate, but I doubt whether any one will be convinced by any of the three, who is not over-anxious to be convinced. One good reason would vastly outweigh these three poor ones. As I have said elsewhere, it seems to me that it is vain to deny that there are errors and inconsistencies in the best texts of our Bible. There are chronological, geographical, and other circumstantial inconsistencies and errors which we should not hesitate to acknowledge. But such errors of inadvertence in minor details where the author's position and character are well known do not destroy his credibility as a witness in any literature or in any court of justice. It is not to be presumed that divine inspiration lifted the author above his age any more than was necessary to convey the divine revelation and the divine instruction with infallible certainty to mankind. The question of credibility is to be distinguished from infallibility. The form is credible, the substance alone is infallible.†

But whatever interpretation we may give to these errors, however much we may reduce them in number, the awkward fact stares us in the face, that these Princeton divines risk the inspiration and authority of the Bible upon a single proved error. Such a position is a

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* *Presbyterian Review*, p. 259. † Briggs' "Biblical Study," p. 240.

serious and hazardous departure from Protestant orthodoxy. It imperils the faith of all Christians who have been taught this doctrine. They cannot escape the evidence of errors in the Scriptures. This evidence will be thrust upon them whether they will or not. They must either shut their eyes or give up their doctrine of inspiration. If they have no better doctrine to put in its place their faith in the Bible will be destroyed. What an awful doctrine to teach in our days when Biblical criticism has the field! What a peril to precious souls there is in the terse, pointed sentence, "A proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine but the Scripture claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims"! No more dangerous doctrine has ever come from the pen of men. It has cost the Church the loss of thousands. It will cost us ten thousand and hundreds of thousands unless the true Westminster doctrine is speedily put in its place. This false doctrine circulates in a tract bearing the imprint of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, among our ministers and people, poisoning their souls and misleading them into dangerous error. This is one of the reasons of the outcry against Biblical criticism. Biblical criticism certainly destroys "our doctrine," but it does not destroy the "Scripture claims." Biblical criticism enters into irrepressible conflict with this modern doctrine, but it rescues the Westminster and Reformation doctrine of the Scripture, and saves the faith of the Church in the Word of God.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The Roman Catholic Church builds the authority of the Scriptures upon the authority of the Church. This results in making the Church of Rome the supreme and

infallible guide of men. The Protestant Reformation recognized the sacred Scriptures themselves as the sole authority over the consciences and life of men. This Protestant doctrine is set forth in all the symbols of the Reformation except the XXXIX Articles, which took an intermediate position, and based the authority of the canon on the testimony of the ancient Church.

We shall cite a few of the Reformed confessions:

"We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets to be the very true Word of God and to have sufficient authority of themselves, not of men."

"Therefore, in controversies of religion or matters of faith we cannot admit any other judge than God Himself, pronouncing by the holy Scriptures what is true and what is false; what is to be followed, or what is to be avoided." *

"We know these books to be canonical, and the sure rule of our faith, not so much by the common accord and consent of the Church, as by the testimony and inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to distinguish them from other ecclesiastical books." †

"The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God."

"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is

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* "2d Helvetic Confession," i. and ii.

† "Gallican Confession," iv. See also the "Belgian Confession," v.

from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."*

The Westminster Confession here carefully states the several kinds of evidence for the divine authority of the Holy Scripture. The authority of the Church cannot give us any more than "a high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture." The authority of the Church leads us to follow its probable testimony in the search for better evidence. The internal evidences of the "excellencies and entire perfection thereof" now present themselves, and under the influence of these features of the Holy Scripture we feel that these are "arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God." But even the powerful weight of internal evidence does not give assurance and certainty, for "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof" comes only from "the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." In accordance with this "the authority of the Holy Scripture dependeth wholly upon God." On this principle the canon is determined. The books of the canon are named, and then it is said, "All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life." The apocryphal books are no part of the canon of Scripture, because they are not of divine inspiration. It is, therefore, the authority of God Himself, speaking through the Holy Spirit, by and with the Word to the heart, that determines that the writings are infallible as the inspired word of God; and it is their inspiration that determines their canonicity.†

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* "Westminster Confession," i. 4–5.

† Cf. Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 116 *seq.*

John Calvin expressed the views of the Reformers when he said:

"But there has very generally prevailed a most pernicious error that the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church, as though the eternal and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men." . . . . "For, as God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own Word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spake by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them." *

And Charles Herle, the prolocutor (moderator) of the Westminster Assembly, explained the Westminster position in these words: †

"They (the Papists) being asked, why they believe the *Scripture* to be the *Word of God?* Answer, because the *Church* says 'tis so; and being asked againe, why they beleeve the Church? They answer, because the *Scripture* saies it *shall be guided into truth;* and being asked againe, why they beleeve that very Scripture that says so? They answer, because the *Church* says 'tis *Scripture*, and so (with those in the Psalm xii. 8), they walk in a *circle* or on *every side.* They charge the like on us (but wrongfully) that we beleeve the *Word*, because it sayes it self that it is so; but we do not so resolve our *Faith;* we *believe unto salvation*, not the *Word* barely, because it witnesses to itself, but because the *Spirit* speaking in it to our *consciences* witnesses to them that it is the Word indeed; we resolve not our *Faith* barely either into the *Word*, or *Spirit*, as its single ultimate *principle*, but into the testimony of the *Spirit* speaking to our *consciences* in the Word." ‡

Dr. Patton does not hesitate to recognize that his

* Calvin's "Institutes," i. 7.

† See also p. 70 for Rutherford's testimony.

‡ Chas. Herle, "Detur Sapienti," pp. 152–3. Lond., 1655.

own views are a departure from the faith of the Reformation, for he says:

"It does not tend in the slightest degree to reconcile us to these opinions to say that the reformers entertained them. It would not be strange if in their opposition to the claims of the church of Rome, they went to the opposite extreme and were in danger of falling into the errors of the mystics."*

Dr. Patton indeed simply reaffirms the position of Dr. Archibald Alexander, the Father of the Princeton theology, who says:

"The high claims of the Romish church, in regard to the authority of fixing the Canon, have already been disproved." . . . . "By the authority of the church, they understand a power lodged in the church of Rome, to determine what books shall be received as the word of God; than which it is scarcely possible to conceive of anything more absurd. In avoiding this extreme, some Protestants have verged towards the opposite, and have asserted, that the only, or principal evidence of the canonical authority of the sacred Scriptures is, their internal evidence. Even some churches went so far as to insert this opinion in their public confessions.† Now, it ought not to be doubted that the internal evidence of the Scriptures is exceedingly strong; and that when the mind of the reader is truly illuminated, it derives from this source the most unwavering conviction of their truth and divine authority; but that every sincere Christian should be able, in all cases, by this internal light, to distinguish between canonical books and such as are not, is surely no very safe or reasonable opinion. Suppose that a thousand books of various kinds, including the canonical, were placed before any sincere Christian, would he be able, without mistake, to select from this mass the twenty-seven books of which the New Testament is composed, if he had nothing to guide him but the internal evidence? Would every such person be able at once to determine, whether the book of *Ecclesiastes*, or of *Ecclesiasticus*, belonged to the Canon of the Old Testament, by internal evidence

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. iv., p. 346.

† See the Confession of the Reformed Gallican Church, quoted on p. 74.

alone?* It is certain, that the influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce a true faith in the word of God; but to make this the only criterion by which to judge of the canonical authority of a book is certainly liable to strong objections. The tendency of this doctrine is to enthusiasm, and the consequence of acting upon it, would be to unsettle, rather than establish, the Canon of Holy Scripture."†

In this passage Dr. Alexander throws himself against the Gallican Confession, as he acknowledges, but he probably did not realize that he was going against the unanimous testimony of the Reformed Confessions, the Westminster Standards, and the entire body of continental Protestants and British Puritans; and he certainly did not apprehend the peril of his departure from the fundamental principle of the Reformation.

Dr. Alexander not only departed from the principle of the Reformation, but actually went over into the camp of the Roman Catholics, and followed the guidance of a Jesuit in his doctrine of the Canon of Scripture. This is clear from the following extract:

"As to the proper method of settling the Canon of the New Testament, the same course must be pursued as has been done in respect to the Old. We must have recourse to authentic history, and endeavor to ascertain what books were received as genuine by the primitive church and early Fathers. The contemporaries, and immediate successors of the apostles, are the most competent witnesses in this case. If, among these, there is found to have been a general agreement, as to what books were canonical, it will go far to satisfy us respecting the true Canon; for it cannot be supposed, that they could easily be deceived in a matter of this sort. A general consent of the early Fathers, and of the primitive church, therefore, furnishes conclusive evidence on this point, and is that species of evidence which is least liable

* See p. 149 for Rutherford's reply to this argument.

† Arch. Alexander, "Canon of the Old and New Testaments," pp. 114–116.

to fallacy or abuse. The learned *Huet* has, therefore, assumed it as a maxim, '*That every book is genuine, which was esteemed genuine by those who lived nearest to the time when it was written, and by the ages following, in a continued series.*' * The reasonableness of this rule will appear more evident, when we consider the great esteem with which these books were at first received; the constant public reading of them in the churches, and the early version of them into other languages." †

Dr. Archibald Alexander thus gave himself unreservedly into the hands of the learned Jesuit without seeing the trap into which he had fallen. Those following him have all fallen into the same error. They have abandoned the principle of the Scriptures as maintained by Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Cartwright, the Reformed Confessions, and the Westminster divines, and have tried to find the rock of our faith in the shifting sand of human tradition.

The Jesuit might safely pursue this method, for he re-enforces it by the infallible authority of the living Church, but the Protestant is left to the uncertainties of historic tradition. It is true that the Anglican Reformation stopped at this half-way house, as they did at others in their Reformation of the English Church, when they laid down the principle—

"In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." . . . . "All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account them for canonical." ‡

But the Westminster divines made these significant changes in this Article of Faith when they revised it:

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* "Demonstratio Evang."

† Arch. Alexander, "Canon of the Old and New Testaments," pp. 113, 114.

‡ The XXXIX Articles—Art. vi.

"By the name of Holy Scripture we understand all the canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, which follow: . . . . All which books, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and acknowledge them to be given by the inspiration of God; and in that regard, to be of most certain credit and highest authority." *

The Anglican view of the authority of Scripture is consistent with the appeal of the Anglo-Catholics to the early Christian Church for authority in matters of church government and worship; but it is entirely inconsistent with the Puritan appeal to the Scriptures alone.

This doctrine of basing the authority of the Scriptures on the authority of the early Church commits two faults, both of which undermine the faith of the Reformation.

(*a*). It comes in conflict with historical criticism. It reopens the question of the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, which were acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church in accordance with the predominant tradition, but were rejected by the Reformed Churches in spite of that tradition. It raises questions in the canon of the Old and New Testaments, for it is well known that there are books therein that were not unanimously received by the early Church. There are some doubtful books. We cannot reach certainty as to the canon by historical criticism. We can only at the best obtain the result that there is unanimous agreement in the early Church as to certain books; that there were some objections to several others; that still other books had many opponents, and that some writings were doubtful. The sum total of this evidence is at its best, probability as to most books and doubt as to others, but certainty in no case.

(*b*). It builds the faith on human evidence that can

* The XXXIX Articles, revised—Article vi.

never claim absolute, unquestioned authority; or give divine infallibility and certainty. Are we, then, to build the authority of the divine Word on human authority? We do not give unquestioned allegiance to the early Church in other matters of faith and practice, why should we grant them the last word as to the foundations of our faith? True Protestants, the sons of the Reformers and Puritans, will never build their confidence in the Word of God except on the rock of divine evidence. "Not because men or kirk sayeth it, but because God quho can not lie sayeth it." *

No historical student can possibly accept any book as divinely inspired simply because the Church of the first three centuries reached that conclusion. If these dogmaticians build on such evidence for canonicity, they put their students, and the people who follow them, in grave peril, so soon as they are confronted with the troublesome questions of historical criticism. The Reformers and the Westminster divines could not commit such folly. No wiles of Jesuits could mislead them, they built on the *fides divina*—the divine evidence of the testimony of the Spirit—and those who do not build with them abandon the rock of the Reformation.

AUTHENTICITY AND CANONICITY.

The elder and the younger Hodge depart still further than their teacher, Dr. Alexander, from the Westminster position, by mixing inspiration and canonicity with questions of authenticity. The Higher or Literary Criticism of the Scriptures has to determine questions of authenticity; that is, whether a writing is anonymous, pseudonymous, or bears the name of its author; whether

* Rutherford's Catechism, i. 6.

the traditional theories as to authorship are correct or not. The Reformers and the Westminster divines did not determine these questions of the Higher Criticism for us. In none of the Catechisms or Confessions do we find deliverances on these questions. In none of them are the questions of inspiration and canonicity mingled with authenticity.

It is well known that the divines of the sixteenth century were free in their expression of differences on these matters of human authorship. The Westminster Confession excludes human authorship from the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, when it states:

"The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man."*

Dr. Charles Hodge takes the following position:

"Before entering on the consideration of these points, it is necessary to answer the question, What books are entitled to a place in the canon, or rule of faith and practice? Romanists answer this question by saying, that all those which the Church has decided to be divine in their origin, and none others, are to be thus received. Protestants answer it by saying, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, that those books, and those only, which Christ and His Apostles recognized as the written Word of God, are entitled to be regarded as canonical. . . . . All, therefore, that is necessary to determine for Christians the canon of the Old Testament, is to ascertain what books were included in the 'Scriptures' recognized by the Jews of that period. This is a point about which there is no reasonable doubt. The Jewish canon of the Old Testament included all the books and no others, which Protestants now recognize as constituting the Old Testament Scriptures. On this ground Protestants reject the so-called apocryphal books. They were not written in Hebrew and were

* I., 4.

not included in the canon of the Jews. They were, therefore, not recognized by Christ as the Word of God. This reason is of itself sufficient. It is however confirmed by considerations drawn from the character of the books themselves. They abound in errors, and in statements contrary to those found in the undoubtedly canonical books. The principle on which the canon of the New Testament is determined is equally simple. Those books, and those only which can be proved to have been written by the Apostles, or to have received their sanction, are to be recognized as of divine authority. The reason of this rule is obvious. The Apostles were the duly authenticated messengers of Christ, of whom He said, 'He that heareth you, heareth me.'"*

This method of determining the canon of Scripture bases its authority on the authority of its human authors and so comes into conflict with the Higher Criticism all along the line of the Old and New Testaments.

(1). Dr. A. A. Hodge says:

"Christ and his apostles endorse as genuine and authentic the canon of Jewish Scriptures as it existed in their time. . . . . The Jewish canon thus endorsed by Christ and his apostles is the same as that we now have."†

Dr. Hodge rests the canonicity of the books of the Old Testament upon this question of fact. Biblical criticism answers it thus:

"Jesus gives His authority to the law, the prophets, and the psalms (Luke xxiv. 44), which alone were used in the synagogue in His times; but the psalms only of the Hagiographa are mentioned. There are no sufficient reasons for concluding that by the psalms Jesus meant all the other books besides law and prophets. . . . . The New Testament carefully abstains from using the writings disputed among the Jews. It does not use at all Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah; and only

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* "Systematic Theology," vol. i., pp. 152–3.

† "Commentary on the Confession of Faith," p. 52.

incidentally Ezekiel and Chronicles, in the same way as apocryphal books and pseudepigraphical are used." *

Dr. Hodge's principle for determining the canon of the Old Testament would rule out several important writings.

(2). Dr. A. A. Hodge states

"We determine what books have a place in this canon or divine rule by an examination of the evidences which show that each of them, severally, was written by the inspired prophet or apostle whose name it bears, or, as in the case of the gospels of Mark and Luke, written under the superintendence and published by the authority of an apostle. This evidence in the case of the sacred Scriptures is of the same kind of historical and critical proof as is relied upon by all literary men to establish the genuineness and authenticity of any other ancient writings, such as the Odes of Horace or the works of Herodotus. In general this evidence is (*a*) Internal,—such as language, style and the character of the matter they contain; (*b*) External,—such as the testimony of contemporaneous writers, the universal consent of contemporary readers, and corroborating history drawn from independent credible sources." †

The inspiration, the canonicity, and the authority of the Bible depends, therefore, upon the results of the Higher Criticism. We are obliged, first, to prove that a writing was composed by an "inspired prophet or apostle whose name it bears, or, as in the case of the gospels of Mark and Luke, written under the superintendence and published by the authority of an apostle." But we cannot prove this for all the writings of the canon.

(*a*). It is probable that the gospel of Mark was written under the influence of Peter, and the gospel of Luke un-

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* Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 131, 132.

† "Commentary on the Confession of Faith," pp. 51–2.

der the influence of Paul, but there is no evidence that the apostles superintended the writing and publication of these gospels, and it is not certain that they had very much to do with them. Are we to reject these gospels because there is uncertainty as to apostolic superintendence and influence?

(*b*). The consensus of criticism is against the Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews. There is no probability that Paul or any other apostle had anything to do with it. Does this destroy its canonicity?

(*c*). It is not certain that Matthew wrote the present gospel of Matthew. A large number of the best evangelical critics hold that the real Matthew was the Aramaic Logia at the basis of the gospel, and that our present Matthew is made up chiefly by the use of the original Matthew and the gospel of Mark by a later evangelist. Does the canonicity of Matthew depend on this question?

(*d*). The gospel of John, after a long and severe contest, is generally acknowledged by critics to be from the hand of the apostle. It is most probable that the apostle John wrote it, but this is not certain. Is a Christian scholar to be compelled to deny its canonicity if he doubts whether John really wrote it?

(*e*). Is the inspiration and authority of the Pentateuch dependent upon the results of the Higher Criticism? The consensus of criticism is that it is an anonymous writing made up of four principal earlier histories, which have been compacted together, and that the Mosaic material is confined to the original sources and the essential features of the legislation. Evangelical critics are not forced to deny the inspiration of the Pentateuch because they are convinced that Moses did not write it in its present form.

(*f*). It is certain that a large proportion of the Old Testament is anonymous,—from unknown authors. Is it safe to hold a theory that leaves no room for an anonymous writing in the canon of Scripture?

(*g*). It is agreed by most critics that Ecclesiastes is a pseudonyme. It is held by many that Daniel and Deuteronomy are also pseudonymes. Must these writings go out of the canon on that account?

(*h*). There are many strong reasons against the authorship of the apocalypse by John the apostle, and the Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles. There are many stronger reasons, in my opinion, in favor of the prevalent traditional theories. But the canonicity of these writings does not depend upon their apostolic authorship.

It is evident, if the elder and younger Hodge are correct in their theory of inspiration, that a very large portion of the Bible is in peril from the Higher Criticism, and that the only way to save the Bible is to destroy the "higher critics." Doubtless many excellent scholars and pious men in the Protestant churches really have this opinion; and that is one of the gravest perils of the present situation. These dogmaticians are responsible for this state of things by the error they have made in making inspiration and canonicity dependent upon authenticity. By persisting in this error they make it necessary that critics should destroy it, for "the Scriptures are sufficiently proved to be God's word by their being wholly to God's glory, and their perfection, and power upon consciences." *

We regret to see Dr. Warfield following in the same path of error, for he has recently said:

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* Herbert Palmer's Catechism, Quest 31.

"We rest our acceptance of the New Testament Scriptures as authoritative thus, not on the fact that they are the product of the revelation-age of the church, for so are many other books which we do not thus accept; but on the fact that God's authoritative agents in founding the church gave them as authoritative to the church which they founded. This mode of presentation excludes the common objection that not all the New Testament books were written by apostles, the point being not apostolic composition, but apostolic gift; and it pulls up by the roots the even commoner objection that the church existed before the New Testament, the point being rather whether the church existed before the authority of the apostles which they have embodied in the New Testament. By this line of remark it is also clear that prophetic and apostolic origin is the very essence of the authority of the Scriptures."*

But how does Dr. Warfield know that the epistle to the Hebrews, and the gospels of Mark and Luke had "apostolic origin" and "apostolic gift"? He cannot prove it. He cannot make it so certain that a reasonable man is bound to accept it on peril of his faith. If this is the "very essence of the authority of the Scripture," that essence is not strong enough to sustain the strain of criticism, and to bear the weight of a world demanding infallible evidence for its faith. Dr. Warfield knows well that many of the best evangelical critics do not agree with him in his traditional views of the literary origin of the New Testament; and yet he does not hesitate to risk the authority of the Scriptures upon the soundness of these traditional theories.

The Reformers found the essence of the authority of the Scriptures in the Scriptures themselves and not in traditional theories about them. Hence they were not anxious about human authorship. Luther denied the Apocalypse to John and Ecclesiastes to Solomon. He

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. x., p. 506.

regarded Jude as an extract from Second Peter. He said: "What matters it if Moses should not himself have written the Pentateuch?" He thought that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by a disciple of the apostle Paul, who was a learned man, and made the epistle as a sort of composite piece in which there are some things hard to be reconciled with the gospel. Calvin denied the Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, and doubted the Petrine authorship of Second Peter. He held that Ezra or some one else edited the Psalter. He regarded Malachi as a pseudonym for Ezra. The great Reformers found no difficulty in recognizing anonymous and pseudonymous writings in the canon of Scripture.*

But recent teachers of theology are doubtless better informed, and are more reliable as exponents and defenders of the faith. So many think; but most Presbyterians and Protestants will prefer to adhere to the broad, catholic and scientific principles of the Reformers and the Great Reformation. They think that the Westminster divines were wiser in their definitions of inspiration and canonicity than the founders and chiefs of a school of theology that is less than a century old. They see that the faith of the Church as defined by its heroic leaders and founders, as set forth in its official symbols, has no quarrel with the Higher Criticism. They have long since discerned that those who are crying out against the Higher Criticism are really exposing the perils of the Traditional theology, which is threatened with destruction by the Higher Criticism; and that they are showing to the world how seriously the scholastic divines have compromised the faith of the Reformation

* Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 165 *seq.*

and the doctrine of the Westminster symbols. I have elsewhere said: The question as to the authenticity of the Bible is whether God is its author: whether it is inspired. This cannot be determined by the Higher Criticism in any way, for the Higher Criticism has only to do with human authorship, and has nothing to do with the divine authorship, which is determined on different principles.* "Who is the author of those Scriptures?" asks William Gouge, one of the leading Westminster divines, in his Catechism. He answers it thus: "The Holy Spirit of God, who inspired holy men to write them."

Dr. A. F. Mitchell well says:

"If any chapter in the Confession was more carefully framed than another, it was this, 'of the Holy Scripture.' It formed the subject of repeated and earnest debate in the House of Commons as well as in the Assembly; and I think it requires only to be fairly examined to make it appear that its framers were so far from desiring to go beyond their predecessors in rigour, that they were at more special pains than the authors of any other Confession—1. To avoid mixing up the question of the canonicity of particular books with the question of their authorship, where any doubt at all existed on the latter point; 2. To leave open all reasonable questions as to the mode and degree of inspiration which could consistently be left open by those who accepted the Scriptures as the *infallible rule* of faith and duty; 3. To refrain from claiming for the text such absolute purity, and for the Hebrew vowel points such antiquity, as was claimed in the Swiss *Formula Concordiae*, while asserting that the originals of Scripture are, after the lapse of ages, still pure and perfect for all those purposes for which they were given; 4. To declare that the sense of Scripture in any particular place is not manifold, but one, and so raise an earnest protest against that system of spiritualizing the text which had been too much countenanced by some of the most eminent of the Fathers, and many of the best of the mystics."†

* "Biblical Study," p. 228.

† "Minutes of the Westm. Assembly," Introd., p. xlix.

We have taken up in detail the four different departures of Modern Orthodoxism from the principle of the Scriptures, as defined in the Westminster standards and the creeds of the Reformation. We have shown how unsound and perilous these departures are in the present situation of affairs. If any one wishes to advance beyond the official doctrine of the Church, in more exact definitions of the doctrine of the Bible, he has a right to do so. If he find any comfort in verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures, we have no desire to disturb him, provided he hold these errors as private opinions and do not seek to impose them upon others. But fidelity to the truth requires that we should state that they are not only extra-confessional, but that they are contrary to truth and fact, and that they are broken reeds that will surely fail any one who leans upon them, and that they are therefore positively dangerous to the faith of ministry and people.

But it is quite different with those who depart so far as to base the authority of the Scriptures upon human authors and the human recognition of the early Church. These are errors that should not be winked at, for they are contra-confessional; they undermine the foundation upon which the Confession is constructed. They destroy the Reformation doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures. They change the base of Protestantism.

CHAPTER V.

Excesses.

Dogmatic Theology has been busy in building up elaborate systems of doctrine by speculation. Speculation is legitimate so far as it is careful in its lines of development and true in its aims. There can be no progress in theology without speculation. Every advance in theology in the past has been through speculation. As Martensen wrote to Dorner in 1868: "Christian speculative theology is the only one that really has a future. . . . . The present movement in theology is no period in theology, but only a transient episode." * But speculation is liable to error and abuse. There are abundant evidences of such error and abuse when we compare the statements of the dogmatic divines with the Westminster Confession. And the abuse is all the greater in those theologians who use speculation in their interpretations of Scripture and the creeds, and then pretend that they are Biblical and confessional.

We shall divide the Westminster Confession into three parts, using it as a provisional test of orthodoxy, and a measure to determine the departures in different directions from the Reformed faith. Each part has eleven chapters. The Traditional orthodoxy has been chiefly engaged in the elaboration of the first eleven chapters.

* "Briefwechsel zwischen, H. L. Martensen und I. A. Dorner," ii. p. 67, Berlin, 1888.

Here is the field of excessive definition, unbounded speculation and contest. We have already considered the first chapter and its doctrine of the Holy Scripture, and have seen that dogmatic divines have gone so far in this doctrine as to change the base of the Reformation. We shall now consider the remaining ten chapters. These chapters treat :

II. Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.
III. Of God's Eternal Decree.
IV. Of Creation.
V. Of Providence.
VI. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the punishment thereof.
VII. Of God's Covenant with Man.
VIII. Of Christ the Mediator.
IX. Of Free Will.
X. Of Effectual Calling.
XI. Of Justification.

It is noteworthy that the "Systematic Theology" of Dr. Charles Hodge devotes 1,592 pages of its three volumes to a discussion of the matters contained in the first eleven chapters of the Confession, leaving 668 pages for the remaining twenty-two chapters. Dr. Shedd, in his "Dogmatic Theology," gives 1,098 pages to the doctrines of these eleven chapters, and only 202 pages to the doctrines of the remaining two-thirds of the Con fession. Other works on Dogmatic Theology show similar methods and results. Here is the field of excessive theological speculation, where the private opinions of Christian scholars have so elaborated the statements of the Westminster symbols that they have put them in improper proportions and in a false light, in the minds of large numbers of the ministry. We shall also find not a few examples in which these divines fail to rise to the heights of the Westminster theology. We shall make this clear by several examples.

THE LIVING GOD.

The Westminster Confession begins its doctrine of God with the statement: "There is but one only living and true God."* The doctrine of the living God is fortified by references to Scripture. "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God."† "But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and an everlasting King."‡ This doctrine of the living God is one of the most prominent features of the Old Testament Scriptures. And yet the dogmatic divines have ignored it. This is very striking in Dr. A. A. Hodge's exposition of this section of the Confession. He says: "This affirmation includes two propositions: (*a.*) There is but one God. (*b.*) This one God is an absolute unit, incapable of division."§ The doctrine of the living God is passed over altogether. This neglect of the doctrine of the living God has resulted in making the God of most dogmaticians an abstraction, a bundle of attributes, and in external and mechanical conceptions of His decrees and their execution. The immutability of God has been elaborated at the expense of His activity, His sovereignty at the cost of His deity. As I have said elsewhere: "There can be little doubt that the substitution of 'Lord' for Jahveh in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the Jewish Rabbinical Theology, has been associated with an undue stress upon the sovereignty of God. The Old Testament revelation in its use of Jahveh emphasized rather the activity of the ever living personal God of revelation. The doctrine of God needs to be enriched at the present

* II. 1. † 1 Thess. i. 9. ‡ Jer. x. 10.

§ "Commentary on the Confession of Faith," p. 71, Presbyterian Board of Publication.

time by the enthronement of the idea of the living God to its supreme place in Biblical theology, and the dethronement of the idea of divine sovereignty from its usurped position in dogmatic theology." * The Westminster divines state this doctrine in its true fundamental position, but the later dogmaticians have changed the Westminster doctrine. Dr. Isaac Dorner rendered an inestimable service to the Church in reasserting the doctrine of the living God, in his discussion of the unchangeableness of God.† But few American divines have paid any attention to it.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

It is sometimes complained that the Westminster Confession does not give sufficient importance to the doctrine of the divine Love. If Dr. A. A. Hodge's exposition of the attributes of God be true, this charge is just, for he takes the position that the justice of God "is not purely optional with him," but that the grace of God "is essentially purely optional with God." We give Dr. Hodge's views in his own words:

"God is no more able to relax the moral perfection of his law, or to remit the penalty as an act of sovereign prerogative, than he is able to lie or to deny himself. Therefore he cannot forgive sin in any case. The sinner may be forgiven, but the sin *must* be punished, either in the person of the sinner or of his substitute. Therefore, the vicarious suffering of the penalty by Christ in the stead of his people, was an absolute NECESSITY to the end of their salvation. . . . . Now while the justice of God is a constitutional perfection of his nature, lying back of and determining his will, and necessitating the punishment of sin in every case, and while his benevolence is a like constitutional

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. vi., p. 527.

† "Jahrb. für deutsche Theologie," 1856–7, and also Dorner's "Gesammelte Schriften," 1883, pp. 188 *seq.*

perfection, determining him to seek the happiness and excellence of his creatures as far as is consistent with the great ends to which the creation is destined, it is, on the other hand, self-evident that 'grace' is essentially purely optional with God. Justice, if it be justice, *must* be executed. But grace, that it may be grace, is a free and purely optional favour, determined solely by the free choice of the sovereign." *

This Dr. Hodge gives forth as Presbyterian doctrine. This is Dr. Hodge's private opinion, in which he is sustained by some dogmaticians, but it is not Presbyterian doctrine; for Presbyterian doctrine is defined by the Westminster standards. The Confession states that God is "most free." How can He be most free if He be the slave of His justice? The Westminster Confession does not give the precedence to the divine justice among the attributes of God. It does not neglect the divine mercy. This is clear from the following statement, where if anything the divine love is magnified above justice:

"Most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." †

There is no neglect of the divine love here. The statement, "most loving," refers to the proof-text, "God is love," ‡ and the proof-texts for the rest of the definition are the classic passages where the divine mercy is magnified.§ Here the doctrine of forgiveness of sin is set forth in all its grandeur as the outflow of the divine love, grace, and mercy. Dr. Hodge says that God "can-

* A. A. Hodge, "Presbyterian Doctrine," pp. 15, 16, Presbyterian Board of Publication.

† "Westminster Confession," ii. 1.

‡ 1 John iv. 8.

§ Ex. xxxiv. 6–7; and, also, Neh. ix. 32, 33.

not forgive sin in any case." But these Scriptures and others teach that it is of God's very nature to forgive sin. The younger Hodge here follows the elder Hodge, who, in his great work on "Systematic Theology," finds little place for "the forgiveness of sin."

The doctrine of the forgiveness of sin is written all over the Scriptures. It is one of the earliest articles of the Apostles' Creed. It is retained in the Westminster Confession. But it has been banished by these modern divines and other dogmaticians from their system. The saintly Rutherford shows how far the scholastic divines differ from the Westminster orthodoxy:

"Common sense will say no more followeth, but goodness and bounty intrinsecall are essentiall to God, and these attributes are essentiall to him, and were from eternity in him, and are his good and bountiful nature; though not either man, angel, or anything else had been created, but while he doth actually extend his goodnesse; ergo, this actual extension of goodnesse is not essentiall to God, but free. Though Adam apprehended God would punish his eating of the forbidden tree; yet if he apprehended that he should not be God, if he did not punish it, his apprehension was erroneous. And this only follows that there is an intrinsicall and internall justice in God, naturall and essentiall in God, but so that the outgoings of his justice, the egressions are most free." *

"It must be a carnall conception and a new dream, that God by necessity of nature, loves himself as clothed with revenging justice, or as just, and his glory of revenging justice, but that God loves himself as mercifull and ready to forgive, or his own glory of pardoning-mercie freely, and by no necessity of nature." †

Shakespeare gives a true and accurate representation of the Biblical and confessional doctrine of justice and mercy which is so lodged in the heart of the Anglo-Saxon race that no dogmaticians can ever get it out:

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* Rutherford, "Covenant of Grace," 1655, p. 28. † *l. c.*, p. 28.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,—
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd,—
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.
But mercy is above the sceptred sway,—
It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then shew likest God's
When mercy seasons justice."

THE DIVINE DECREE.

The most difficult doctrine in the Westminster standards is the doctrine of the "divine decree." * There can be no doubt that the Westminster divines were Calvinists, that they held in the main to the Canons of Dort, and that they excluded Arminians and semi-Arminians from orthodoxy. The definitions of the Westminster standards were made with this end in view. They are sharp, hard, polemical, and exclusive; and, at the same time, apologetic, defensive, and guarding themselves from objections at every point. I do not know where any such careful and admirable definitions can be found. At the same time it is my opinion that in this respect the Westminster divines went too far in their polemics. They sharpened their definitions into swords and spears that are as dangerous in the hands of unskillful Calvinists as they are to their Arminian foes. It is not surprising that these definitions have ever been regarded as hard and offensive, and that they have kept multitudes from uniting with the Presbyterian Church.

* Chap. iii.

The present movement for revision at this point has many arguments in its favor. Dr. Howard Crosby undoubtedly expresses the views of many Presbyterian ministers and laymen when he says:

"Surely from these Scriptures we can safely say that any scheme of theology that makes God partial, resolving to furnish his grace only to some of those whom he invites, and wilfully excluding others from all participation in it, is an unscriptural scheme, whatever may be its philosophical merits." *

The antithesis to Dr. Crosby we find in Dr. A. A. Hodge's exposition of the Confession:

"That as God has sovereignly destinated certain persons, called the elect, through grace to salvation, so he has sovereignly decreed to withhold his grace from the rest; and that this withholding rests upon the unsearchable counsel of his own will, and is for the glory of his sovereign power." †

It ought to be said, however, in defense of the Westminster definitions (*a*) that the decree is not an arbitrary decree. The Westminster divines do not make this mistake of modern divines in building on the absolute sovereignty of God. "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." ‡ Wisdom and holiness are the qualities of that counsel or plan of God out of which the decrees issue. God is a sovereign, but He is a most wise one and a most holy one. God is absolute in His sovereignty because He is God, but His sovereignty is the sovereignty not merely of a monarch, but of a Creator, a Father, and, above all, of the infinitely holy and loving God. The attribute of Love is wrapped up in every decree, and Holiness is at

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* "Responsibility before the Gospel," p. 4.

† "Commentary on the Confession of Faith," pp. 107–8. ‡ III. 1.

the root of every divine act. These qualifications of the decree in the Westminster standards are too often overlooked.

(*b*). God's decrees are not violent and destructive of the liberty and moral nature of His creatures. The decrees are qualified by the statement, "Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." I do not see how it is possible to improve this statement.

But it would have been better for us if the Westminster divines had stopped with sections 1, 5, 6, 8, and that sections 2, 3, 4, 7 had never been framed. I personally do not object to them, because they are all wrapped up in the first section; they are all qualified by its statements, and are not to be interpreted as if they stood apart. At the same time the history of Presbyterianism shows that they have ever been perverted by ultra-Calvinists as well as by Arminians, and that they have been stumbling-blocks in the way of the ignorant.

(*c*). Arminian doctrine is excluded by the statement, "Although God knows whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." * But this does not justify the dogmatic divines in going over to the other extreme and stating, "Presbyterians hold that God eternally foreknows all events that come to pass as certainly future, because he has predetermined them to be so." † This may be the doctrine of some Presbyterian dogmaticians, but it is not the doc-

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* III. 2.

† A. A. Hodge, "Presbyterian Doctrine," p. 11.

trine of the Westminster symbols. The foreknowledge of God and the decree of God are not to be ranged either in chronological or logical sequence. They are united in the "most wise and holy counsel of His own will." As Dr. Dabney well says: "God's decree has no succession; and to Him no successive order of parts, because it is a contemporaneous unit comprehended altogether by one infinite intuition." *

(*e*). The ground of the divine election is "His mere free grace and love," and it is "all to the praise of His glorious grace." An election of love, an election of divine grace is not an election at which any man should stumble. For what more comprehensive plan of redemption could be devised than a redemption that is born of the love of God and is carried on in all its processes by divine grace? For who can limit the love of God or measure His infinite grace?

Salvation by the divine grace alone is the fundamental principle of the Reformed Churches. Those dogmaticians who have substituted the "good pleasure of His will," meaning thereby "absolute sovereignty," have changed the base of the Reformed doctrine, and have gone very far in the direction of committing the well-nigh unpardonable sin of limiting the grace of God. It is not a Calvinistic doctrine that the great mass of mankind will be reprobated, passed by, and lost in hell forever. Calvinism, rather, by its emphasis of the wonderful richness, fulness, and freeness of the divine grace, raises our expectations to the point that comparatively few will be lost. It is certain that the love of God infinitely surpasses the love of all mankind; and that love so displayed itself in the unspeakable gift of His

* "Theology," p. 233.

only begotten Son for the redemption of the world, that the world as a world will be saved, and those ultimately lost will be fewer than any one of us can suppose.

Presbyterianism is not responsible for the abuse of the doctrine of election and reprobation. The burden of that sin rests on the dogmaticians more than upon the Confession. Their limitation of the divine grace to a few is not sustained by the Confession or by the Scriptures. It is rather an inheritance from the mediæval scholasticism, and is based upon the apocalypse of Ezra. Dr. Mitchell has called attention to the fact that the Westminster divines did not build their statements on the Synod of Dort, but on the Irish Articles:

"But it is remarkable that, though the Assembly met after the Synod of Dort, and had for its president one whose opinions on these mysterious subjects were almost as pronounced as those of Gomarus himself, it fell back not on the decrees of that Synod, but on the Articles of the Irish Church, which had been drawn up before the Synod of Dort was summoned, or the controversies its decrees occasioned had waxed so fierce. The debates of the Assembly clearly show that its members did not wish to determine several particulars decided by the Synod of Dort, far less to determine them more rigidly than it had done. They even intentionally left open one point which the Irish divines thought fit to determine. They spoke indifferently of the 'decree' and of the 'decrees' of God, while the Irish divines speak of only one and 'the same decree'; and from the notes of their debates given below, it will be seen that this was done because all were not agreed upon the point, and in order that every one might enjoy his own sense!"*

The debate here referred to is so important that we give an extract from it in order to show that the Westminster Confession is not so scholastic in its definitions as some recent writers have supposed:

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* "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," Dr. Mitchell, Introd., pp. liv.–v.

"*Ordered.*—Proceed in the debate about permission of man's fall; about 'the same decree.'

"*Mr. Rutherford.*—. . . .

"*Mr. Seaman.*—If those words 'in the same decree' be left out, will involve us in a great debate.

"*Mr. Rutherford.*—All agree in this, that God decrees the end and means, but whether in one or more decrees is not. . . . . Say God also hath decreed. . . . . It is very probable but one decree, but whether fit to express it in a Confession of Faith. . . . .

"*Mr. Seaman.*—. . . . .

"*Mr. Rutherford.*—If there can be any argument to prove a necessity of one and the same decree, we should be glad to hear it.

"*Mr. Whitakers.*—If you take the same decree in reference to time, they are all *simul* and *semel; in eterno* there is not *prius* and *posterius.*

"*Dr. Gouge.*—I do not see how the leaving out of those words will cross that we aim at; I think it will go on roundly without it.

"*Mr. Whitakers.*—Our conceptions are very various about the decrees, but I know not why we should not say it.

"*Mr. Seaman.*—All the odious doctrine of Arminians is from their distinguishing of the decrees, but our divines say they are one and the same decree.

"*Mr. Gillespie.*—When that word is left out, is it not a truth, and so every one may enjoy his own sense.

"*Mr. Reynolds.*—Let not us put in disputes and scholastical things into a Confession of Faith; I think they are different decrees in our manner of conceptions.

"*Mr. Seaman.*—You know how great a censure the Remonstrants lie under for making two decrees concerning election, and will it not be more concerning the end and means?

"*Mr. Calamy.*—That it may be a truth, I think in our Prolocutor's book he gives a great deal of reason for it; but why should we put it in a Confession of Faith?"*

Reynolds, as the result of this debate, proposed the following statement, which we place in parallelism with the Westminster definition, in order to show the final result:

* "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," p. 150.

MR. REYNOLDS.	CONFESSION.
"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He by the same eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means thereunto, which He in His counsel is pleased to appoint for the executing of that decree; wherefore they who are endowed with so excellent a benefit, being fallen in Adam, are called in according to God's purpose."*	"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation."†

The Westminster divines debated long and keenly the doctrine of the redemption of the elect only; and the final result of that debate, in the definition of the Confession on reprobation, was such that Calamy, Marshall, Vines, Seaman, Arrowsmith, Harris, and many others who advocated the doctrine of Davenant and Amyraut, could subscribe to them. These held, in the words of Calamy:

"I am far from universal redemption in the Arminian sense; but that that I hold is in the sense of our divines in the Synod of Dort, that Christ did pay a price for all,—absolute intention for the elect, conditional intention for the reprobate in case they do believe,—that all men should be *salvabiles, non obstante lapsu Adami*, ... that Jesus Christ did not only die sufficiently for all, but God did intend, in giving of Christ, and Christ in giving Himself, did intend to put all men in a state of salvation in case they do believe."‡

* "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," Dr. Mitchell, p. 152.

† "Confession of Faith," Chap. III., Sec. vi.

‡ "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," p. 152.

A Westminster divine, and a teacher of Systematic Theology at Cambridge, makes the following statement:

"I desire to have it punctually observed that the vessels of wrath are only said *to be fitted to destruction*, without naming by whom, God, Satan, or themselves; whereas on the other side, God himself is expressly said to have prepared his chosen *vessels of mercy unto glory*. Which was purposely done (as I humbly conceive) to intimate a remarkable difference between election and preterition; in that election is a proper cause not only of salvation itself, but of all the graces which have any causal tendency thereunto; and therefore God is said to prepare his elect to glory: Whereas negative reprobation is no proper cause, either of damnation itself, or of the sin that bringeth it, but an antecedent only; wherefore the non-elect are indeed said to be fitted to that destruction which their sins in the conclusion bring upon them, but not by God. I call it a remarkable difference, because where it is once rightly apprehended and truly beleeved, it sufficeth to stop the mouth of one of those greatest calumnies and odiums which are usually cast upon our doctrine of predestination, viz., that God made sundry of his creatures on purpose to damn them: a thing which the rhetoric of our adversaries is wont to blow up to the highest pitch of aggravation. But it is soon blown away by such as can tell them, in the words of the excellent *Dr. Davenant*, 'It is true that the elect are severally created to the end and intent that they may be glorified, together with their head Christ Jesus: But for the non-elect we cannot truly say that they are created to the end that they may be tormented with the Devil and his Angels. . . . . No man is created by God with a nature and quality fitting him to damnation. Yea neither in the state of his innocency, nor in the state of the fall and his corruption, doth he receive anything from God which is a proper and fit means of bringing him to his damnation.' And therefore damnation is not the end of any man's creation."*

* John Arrowsmith's "Chain of Principles," pp. 335 *seq.*, 1659.

CREATION.

The doctrine of creation has greatly changed since the Confession was composed. All the profound discoveries of modern science in geology, astronomy, chemistry, biology, and archæology, have opened up new problems for the doctrine of creation that were not in the minds of the Westminster divines. Accordingly there are many different views on this subject now existing in the Presbyterian Church.

The doctrine of the Confession is very simple:

> "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good."*

Modern science takes exception to the "six days" and "make of nothing" in their connections in this definition and in their historical interpretation.

Modern science has made a great change in the attitude of the Church to these questions. There is no longer agreement as to the six days of creation, and there are many who deny separate creations out of nothing. The doctrine of development has the field, and not a few Presbyterian ministers have committed themselves to it. There are few who believe that the world was created in six days of twenty-four hours. The vast majority of our ministers—yes, we may say all scholars—recognize that the creation of the heavens and the earth took long periods of time.

There is great difference of opinion among Biblical scholars whether the six days of the first chapter of

* IV. 1.

Genesis can mean any more than six days of twenty-four hours. But even if these six days are six periods of time, the first day's work begins with the creation of light, and seems to presuppose the primitive chaos which must then have been produced before the six days' work began. Some put the vast periods of astronomy and geology in this introductory time. But the Confession leaves no room for this opinion, inasmuch as it states that the entire work of creation took place in the six days.

The doctrine of development does not recognize creation out of nothing, except so far as the primitive germs are concerned, prior to all forms of life and matter mentioned in the Biblical narrative. It is now conceded by many Biblical scholars that the Old Testament does not teach the doctrine of creation out of nothing, and that the Westminster divines misinterpreted the first chapter of Genesis when they found that doctrine there.

Science is not certain in its history of the development of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. It is not easy to reconcile the present scientific theories with the poem of the creation in its order of the creation. It is not clear whether development is unbroken from the beginning, whether there were many stages or crises, or whether there was need of creative energy at several different stages in the development.

It is impossible at present to hold Presbyterian ministers and professors to the exact statements of this Westminster definition.

The Southern Presbyterian Church has recently committed folly in excluding one of its ablest divines from his professorship in a theological seminary for teaching the doctrine of the development of Adam's body out of organic matter, instead of the usual theory

of its immediate divine organization out of inorganic matter, clay or dust.

There is no consensus in the Church at present in the doctrine of creation. The most that we could agree upon would be that God created all things, and that ultimately there was creation out of nothing.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN.

The Westminster Standards are not so rich and full in their anthropology as in their doctrine of God and their doctrine of redemption. A great difference of opinion has prevailed in Presbyterian circles in this field, as any one can see who will compare the system of theology of Dr. Hodge with the system of theology of Dr. Shedd, and these with current opinions in the Church.

There is no agreement as to the original righteousness in which our first parents lived in paradise. The Confession represents that our first parents were "endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," but the Larger Catechism describes it as "the estate of innocency wherein they were created."

The Committee of the English Presbyterian Church in their new articles of the Faith rightly follow the Larger Catechism. Dr. Warfield, in his criticism of these Articles, strangely asks: "Is the statement in Article V. of man's original state as one 'of innocence' (rather than of a positive righteousness and true holiness) a further concession to science?"*

There has been a great change in psychology since the Westminster Standards were written, as well as in ethical philosophy. This must be kept in mind by any one who would know what were their teachings on

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. x., p. 122.

the doctrine of man. We have to distinguish Biblical psychology from the psychology of the seventeenth century, and then recognize that all our thinking at the present time is based upon an entirely different psychology.

The whole tendency of modern times has been to emphasize the individual man and his actions. The Westminster divines had a deeper sense of the solidarity of the human race. Hence they did not hesitate to lay stress upon original sin as at the basis of all sins of thought, word, and deed. They did not have the same difficulty as moderns experience with the doctrine that—

> "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgression." *

The Westminster divines did not sufficiently appreciate the ethical development of mankind. They so emphasized sin as against God, and in its infinite guilt as against the Creator, and the original act of Adam's sin in all its dreadful consequences, that they left little room for the doctrine of the development of sin in the individual and the race. It is just here that modern psychology and ethics have enlarged our field of study, and so brought to light many statements of Scripture that the Westminster divines overlooked and neglected.

Many dogmatic divines, by an undue use of the term total depravity, have exaggerated the faults of the Standards themselves, so that they have no conception of the

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* "Larger Catechism," Question 25.

stages of growth of sin in human life and human history; no space for the ripening of sin for the judgment; no room for distinguishing reprobate men from demons, or for degrees of punishment after the judgment of the day of doom. The mass of sin and the race of sinners are so prominent to the dogmaticians, that they have little or no sense for the variations of sin and guilt, and the wonderful diversity of character and acts of sinners. It is not so easy as it used to be to think that for any act of sin, however small its importance, relatively speaking, the sinner must suffer in hell-fire forever, unless redeemed by the grace of God. It is a hard doctrine to teach that all mankind are doomed to everlasting damnation for the original sin in which we share with our first parents, no matter what the theory of that participation may be.

The Scriptures distinguish between sins that are pardonable and those that cannot be forgiven, between those that may be covered over by sacrifice and those that cannot be covered over by sacrifice, but may be forgiven by the grace of God without sacrifice. And our Saviour teaches that there is one only unpardonable sin; that the sin against the Holy Spirit is the only one that cannot be forgiven, either in this life or the next. The Westminster Standards leave this field of the doctrine of sin entirely unworked. Modern German theology has made great progress in this direction, but this progress has not been shared in by British and American dogmaticians.

HUMAN INABILITY.

Great conflicts have been waged in former years on the freedom of the will, the imputation of sin, and human inability. I do not propose to enter into these

questions that divided the old school Calvinists from the new school. I call attention to the differences, in order to show that the Westminster Standards have not determined all these questions for us, and that there are still now, as there ever have been, differences among Presbyterians on these subjects. It will suffice to quote Dr. Dabney on this subject:

"I have said that the attempts made by Rivet and other later divines, to prove that their doctrine of immediate precedaneous imputation is that of the Reformed Churches and Symbols, are vain. My conviction is that this scheme, like the supralapsarian, is a novelty and an over-refinement, alien to the true current of the earlier Reformed theology; and some of Placæus' day were betrayed into the exaggerations by the snare set for them by his astuteness and their own over-zeal to expose him." *

It is of some importance, however, to consider briefly the question of human inability, for here the difficulty is chiefly felt. Dr. A. A. Hodge teaches that the inability of man to accept Christ and fulfill the law of God is (1) absolute, (2) moral, (3) natural.† But Henry B. Smith says that the

"Scriptures always conjoin the two truths of natural ability and moral inability, and they should be conjoined in all preaching." . . . . "All the inability he is under is a sinful inability. This is an unwillingness, which is not merely an act of the will, or a lack of action, but is also a state of the will, constituting a real and sufficient obstacle to his actually doing right. He has the ability in will as the power of choice, to accept or reject the grace offered to him, to obey or disobey the calls,—has the efficiency though not the sufficiency." ‡

These careful distinctions of Dr. Smith, although not made in the Westminster Standards, are not against the

* "Theology," p. 347.

† "Commentary on the Confession of Faith," p. 226.

‡ "System of Christian Theology," pp. 335–6.

Standards. But there are not a few Presbyterians who with Dr. Howard Crosby are in direct antithesis to the Standards on this question.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.	HOWARD CROSBY.
"Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."*	"We are thus left to a clear, simple, honest gospel. Christ calls all to come to him. The Father has given his Word and Spirit to draw all. If any come not, it is simply because they will not let the Father draw them by his Word and Spirit." ‡
"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and these only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." †	"Every man has full ability to reject or accept the gospel of salvation. God has given no more ability to one than another." . . . . "The ability to exercise this Faith is given to all." . . . . "The salvation is altogether of Christ and his wonderful grace. Nevertheless the faith, the grasp, the acceptance, was the sinner's own (and not God's) act, ability to exercise which is God's gift, and given to all." §

* Chapter ix. 3.

† Chapter x. 1.

‡ "Responsibility before the Gospel," p. 8.

§ *l. c.*, p. 10.

The Confession teaches that no man has ability of will to any spiritual good, except the elect to whom it is given by God. Dr. Crosby teaches that all men have full ability, and that God has given no more ability to one than to another. The Confession teaches that God effectually calls by His Word and Spirit those whom He has predestinated unto life, and those only; but Dr. Crosby teaches that the Father has given His Word and Spirit to draw all men.

THE MEDIATOR.

One of the best chapters of the Confession is the one entitled "Of Christ the Mediator"; and the corresponding questions in the Larger Catechism are still fuller and richer. The Westminster divines grasped the whole subject of the Person and Work of Christ, and stated it under the head of the "Mediator." Here, as elsewhere, the dogmaticians have cramped the Westminster theology. Dr. E. D. Morris, in a recent article, said:

"In more recent usage the theological term, atonement, though not sustained by either confessional or Scriptural warrant, has largely taken the place of the other and more inclusive word. Whatever may be the reason for the fact, it is the atonement wrought by Christ, rather than His mediation comprehensively considered, which is most discussed and emphasized in modern theology."*

An Irish divine also tells us that:

"Modern popular theology dwells exclusively upon the atonement, without taking cognizance of the connection between it and the incarnation, which is practically left out of sight. Ancient theology dwelt almost though not altogether as exclusively upon the incarnation. Athanasius goes so far as to say the Son became man 'that by the power of his incarnation he might make men God;' again, 'becoming man himself he made

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. vii., p. 232.

men to be Sons and to be Gods!' The disadvantage of the former extreme is that it gives the whole plan of salvation a dry, legal, arbitrary aspect, which does not recommend itself to the conscience, and deprives the atonement of its essential character of an inward moral process. One of the disadvantages of the patristic extreme is that it tends to connect the Lord's generic life with the old humanity into which he entered, rather than with the new of which he was the head. He did not simply restore the old, but created the new; there is no change in human nature in the abstract; that which is flesh remains flesh in us, and produces in every successive generation the same evil fruits. He arrested the stream of corruption in himself, purifying and transforming our nature: 'human nature was blessed in him,' but the change is confined to his sacred person, and to those who by faith begin to participate in his life. The new order of things and the reign of Redemption properly date from the resurrection; though, since he gave himself to us in becoming man, and since his life was a moment of transition more momentous than any other crisis in history, it was no mistake when the Christians of the sixth century made the new era begin with his birth." *

Accordingly the work of redemption has been chiefly confined, in modern theology, to the work wrought upon the cross; to the neglect of the doctrines of the incarnation, the holy life, the descent into hades, the resurrection, the enthronement, the reign of Christ, and the second advent; all of which are essential to the work of redemption.

Another recent writer has called attention to the serious neglect in modern doctrine of the incarnation and its redemptive significance, and has urged reacting toward the early theology of the Greek Church as a true step in progress.† It was one of the chief merits of the late Henry B. Smith, that he overcame this defect and

* "Religion of Redemption," R. W. Monsell, pp. 121–2. London, 1867.

† A. V. G. Allen's "The Continuity of Christian Thought," Boston, 1884.

made "incarnation in order to redemption" one of the most characteristic features of his system of doctrine.

The doctrine of the humiliation of Christ has also been neglected until quite recent times. Dr. Bruce,* following Dr. Dorner and other German divines, has built on the Westminster statements, and enriched the doctrine, especially in its ethical aspects.

On the other hand, other Presbyterians have followed the Lutheran doctrine of the Kenosis, and advanced into dangerous error. Thus Dr. Howard Crosby goes so far as to state:

"The divine nature, as regards its efficiency, was dormant in Christ during His humiliation. Its essence was there, for it is impossible for Deity to become extinct, but its efficiency was in some mysterious way paralyzed in the person of Jesus."†

"There is not and ought not to be a vestige of Deity in His (Christ's) conscious life till after the resurrection."‡

"No *action* of our Saviour's earthly life from Bethlehem to Calvary, exhibits divinity."§

"A present, active Godhood would have destroyed the babe and made a monstrosity."‖

All of these sentences are in conflict with the following Westminster definitions:

"It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favour, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation."¶

"The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took

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* "Humiliation of Christ." Sixth series of the Cunningham Lectures.

† "True Humanity of Christ," p. 26. ‡ *l. c.*, p. 44.

§ *l. c.*, p. 23. ‖ *l. c.*, p. 37. ¶ "Larger Catechism," Q. 38.

upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death until his resurrection."*

These statements teach that Christ emptied Himself of His glory in His state of humiliation. Dr. Crosby declares that Christ emptied Himself of His divinity. The Standards teach that the divine nature was active, sustaining the human nature of Christ and giving worth and efficacy to His sufferings and obedience. Dr. Crosby teaches that the divine nature was inactive and inefficient, and as to its efficacy paralyzed.

In the doctrine of the atonement too much stress has been laid upon theories of substitution and satisfaction in connection with the death of Christ on the cross, using the symbolism of the slaying of the sacrificial victim, and the peculiar idea of the guilt or trespass-offering of the Old Testament. The significance of the other more important ceremonies in connection with the Old Testament sacrifices and the meaning of the more ancient and more frequent sacrifices, have been overlooked. The symbolism of the Old Testament sacrifices is much richer than the dogmatic divines have yet realized. The whole burnt-offering has as its antitype the ascension of the holy Jesus into the heavens to offer His whole body and person a voluntary offering acceptable to God, the pledge and surety of the acceptance of the worship of His people. The peace-offering has as its antitype, the provision that the enthroned Messiah has made for the nourishment of His people in communion with Him. The special peace-offerings, such as the covenant sacrifice and the passover, lead on to the Lord's Supper, with its provision of the flesh and blood of the Messiah as the source of life and growth to His people. The sin-offering, with its application of blood to the divine altars

* "Larger Catechism," Q. 46.

to purge them from the filth of sin, has as its counterpart the ascent of our Saviour to heaven to become the blood-stained throne of grace. The significance of these offerings is not so much in the death of the victim as in the use of the flesh and blood of the victim after it had been slain. And so modern theology, by limiting itself to the death of the cross, has not apprehended the most important points in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and in the work of our Saviour Himself. We do not worship a dead Christ; we are not redeemed by a buried Redeemer. The Lamb of God who taketh away all sin, is a lamb that was slain, but has ever since lived and will live forever. To the living and enthroned Saviour we look for salvation.

Accordingly the dogmaticians have neglected Christ's state of exaltation. One of my colleagues tells me that in his youth he never heard a discourse on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. How small a proportion of the teaching and preaching is upon the reigning Christ and the Christ of the Second Advent! The proportion of the Scriptures has been neglected. The proportion of the Westminster Standards has been abandoned. Dr. Morris presents this very strikingly in the following table of Christological topics:

	MEDIATION.	PROPHECY.	PRIESTHOOD.	KINGSHIP.
Van Oosterzee.	8 pages.	6 pages.	34 pages.	7 pages.
Dorner.....	10 "	4 "	153 "	27 "
Charles Hodge.	7 "	2 "	130 "	13 "
Henry B. Smith.	6 "	0 "	51 "	11 "

This table justifies his excellent though over-cautious words:

"It is also a delicate and yet just query whether, in the strong and tender emphasizing of the priestly office so characteristic of evangelical Protestantism ever since the Reformation, Christ the King and Christ the prophet have not been relatively too much retired from both dogma and experience. It is a still more delicate query whether, as Lutheran writers have sometimes alleged, the Reformed theology has not been especially prone to exalt the *Christus pro nobis*, centered particularly in the priesthood, at the expense of the *Christus in nobis*, manifested especially in our Divine Teacher and Example, Ruler and Lord."*

Dr. Morris might have gone further and stated with propriety that the larger portion of the material he has included under the head of the priesthood of Christ really belongs to Christ the victim, the sacrifice, and not to Christ the priest; and this would have shown that the doctrine of the heavenly priesthood has also been neglected.

In all these respects the dogmaticians and the ministry have abandoned the proportions of the Standards and have neglected their express statements. No one can truly say that the following excellent definition is followed, in its proportions and in all its sentences, by the Presbyterian Church of our day:

"It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man, the prophet, priest, and king; the head and saviour of his Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did, from all eternity, give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified."†

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* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. vii., pp. 243-44.

† "Confession of Faith," chap. viii., sec. 1.

EFFECTUAL CALLING.

The work of Redemption begins, so far as man is concerned, with *effectual calling*. Under this head the Westminster divines brought all that has been ordinarily treated, since the rise of Methodism, under the head of regeneration. It is noteworthy that the Westminster divines have no chapter or section upon regeneration and seldom use the term. The Scriptures use other terms besides regeneration—such as resurrection and creation. Regeneration presents the new life from one point of view, but does not by any means give a comprehensive statement of the whole subject. Such a comprehensive view can be gained only by a synthesis of all the terms used in the Scriptures.

I do not propose to consider all the variations from this chapter that now exist in the Church; I shall limit myself to a few.

In the times of the Westminster Assembly, little was known of the heathen world. The divines did not stumble over the doctrine of the lost condition of the heathen. A few broad-minded men, such as Zwingli, indulged in a larger hope, and thought that the grace of God might save Socrates and Plato; but these were exceptions, and this view was looked upon with suspicion. It is only by the vast extension of commerce in modern times, and the opening up of the world to the knowledge of the Church, that Christian people have been impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind now living are given up to everlasting punishment by the Old Theology; and accordingly, recoiling from this pit of horror, the Church in general and most recent theologians have sought in some way to save some of the heathen.

The Westminster doctrine of the salvation of infants is stated in the Westminster Confession.* "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." In this clause the Westminster divines recognize that salvation is not confined to those who are outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. Some who never hear the Gospel of redemption in this world are saved by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, redemption is not confined to those who have been baptized.

"Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated."† Thus, the Westminster divines take the position of the Reformed Churches, that the divine electing grace is not confined to external means; that the ordinary means of grace are not essential to salvation; and that there are some elect persons who are saved without them.

These persons saved without baptism and the outward ministry of the Word are not "infants" and "other persons," or "all infants" and "all other persons," but "elect infants" and "all other elect persons"; and the latter not "all other elect persons who *have not been* outwardly called," but "all other elect persons who are *incapable of being* outwardly called by the ministry of the Word." It seems plain that the adjective "elect" limits "infants" as it does "all other persons"; and that

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* Chap. x. 3.

† Chap. xxviii. 5.

the Westminster Confession teaches that there are some elect persons among infants and incapables who cannot hear the Gospel, as well as among those who hear the Gospel and enjoy the sacraments. That this is the meaning of the Confession was not doubted till recent times. But in the present century, evangelical opinion has settled to the theory that all infants dying in infancy are saved; and many Presbyterians endeavor to interpret the Confession of Faith to conform with the modern theory. There can be no doubt that the Confession means by "all other elect persons" incapables—that is, those who have not their normal faculties of mind, and so, like infants, are "incapable" of hearing the outward call of the Gospel and of responding to it. The authors of the Confession had no thought of including the heathen in this class. Those who seek to find a basis for the salvation of elect heathen must look for it elsewhere. For the heathen are not "incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word." They are entirely capable of being called, and that is the reason why we are to preach the Gospel to them. The incapacity here is not in the heathen or in the Saviour and His salvation, but in the Church and the ministry of the Word.

It was conceived by the Westminster divines that incapables might have an internal call and be regenerated. But no Westminster divines thought of saving the heathen in that way. Indeed the next section expressly rules them out from salvation:

"Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so

diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested."*

The Larger Catechism puts it still more tersely when it says:

"Q. Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?

"ANS. They, who having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the church."†

There is no salvation for those who have not believed in Jesus Christ and been justified by faith, according to the Westminster Standards. Those who fall back upon the freedom and fulness of the grace of God for the salvation of some heathen may be correct, but they go against the express doctrines of the Standards and assert what the Confession regards as very "pernicious and detestable error."

DAMNATION OF INFANTS.

The Westminster Confession classes incapables and infants together, and teaches that there are elect ones among them as well as among others. In recent times the Church has stumbled over the doctrine of the damnation of infants, and the phrase "elect infants" which seems to imply that doctrine. It is necessary for us to determine its historical meaning.

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* "Confession of Faith," chap. x., sec. 4.

† "Larger Catechism," Q. 60.

The original phrase as reported to the Westminster Assembly by the third grand committee, November 13, 1645, was "*elect of infants.*" This committee consisted of twenty-eight in all, a third of the Assembly. Their phrase makes their opinion sufficiently evident. We shall give an extract from one of them, Anthony Burgess, who lectured against the Antinomians early in the year 1646 at the request of the President and Fellows of Sion College, London. He published his book, "Vindiciæ Legis," at their request. He was regarded as expressing the views of the Presbyterians at this time in this controversy. He says:

"The third Question concerning this naturall light is, *Whether it be sufficient for salvation?* For, there are some that hold, If any man, of whatsoever Nation he be, worship God according to the light of Nature, and so serve him, he may be saved. Hence they have coined a distinction of a three-fold piety: *Judica, Christiana, and Ethenica.* Therefore say they, What Moses was to the Jewes, and Christ to the Christians; the same is Philosophy, or the knowledge of God by nature, to Heathens. But this opinion is derogatory to the Lord Christ; for onely by faith in his Name can we be saved, as the Scripture speaketh. And, certainly, if the Apostle argued that Christ died in vain, if workes were joyned to him; how much more if he be totally excluded? It is true, it seemeth a very hard thing to mans reason, that the greater part of the world, being Pagans and Heathens, with all their infants, should be excluded from heaven. Hence, because *Vedelius*, a learned man, did make it an aggravation of Gods grace to him, to chuse and call him, when so many thousand thousands of pagan-infants are damned: this speech, as being full of horridnesse, a scoffing Remonstrant takes, and sets it forth odiously in the Frontispice of his Book. But, though our reason is offended, yet we must judge according to the way of the Scripture; which makes Christ the only way for salvation. If so it could be proved, as *Zwinglius* held, that Christ did communicate himself to some Heathens, then it were another matter. I will not bring all the places they stand upon, that which

is mainly urged is *Act* 10. *of Cornelius;* his prayers were accepted, and, saith *Peter, now I perceive,* &c. But this proceedeth from a meere mistake; For *Cornelius* had the implicite knowledge and faith of Christ and had received the doctrine of the *Messias,* though he was ignorant of Christ, that individuall Person.

"And as for that worshipping of him in euery Nation, that is not to be understood of men abiding so, but whereas before it was limited to the Jewes, now God would receive all that should come to him, of what Nation soeuer." *

The minutes of the Westminster Assembly show that there was "a debate about elect of infants"; but inasmuch as there is no report of the debate and no indication of points of difference, such as we find in the minutes when important differences were developed, the debate was doubtless upon the mode of expression. The phrase seems not to have been changed by vote of the Assembly, for there is no record of such a vote. It was probably changed as a matter of style either by the Committee that had charge of "the wording of the Confession of Faith," or by Dr. Cornelius Burgess, who had charge of the final transcription of the Confession before it was taken up to Parliament.

The Committee on "the wording of the Confession" consisted of Edward Reynolds, Charles Herle, Matthew Newcommen, John Arrowsmith, and the commissioners of the Church of Scotland. We shall give the testimony of two of them.

Robert Baylie, one of the Scottish commissioners, excludes the infants of the heathen from the salvation enjoyed by the infants of believers in the following terse form of catechism:

"An infantes fidelium habendi sunt tam vacui sanctitate, tam alieni a benedictionibus Christi et regno coelorum quam infantes

* "Vindiciæ Legis," 1647, pp. 80, 81.

Turcarum et Paganorum? Resp. Horrenda haec crudelitas contradicit Apostolo. I. ad. Cor. vii. 19. Item Christo Marci, xiv. 16." *

Samuel Rutherford, another of the Scotch commissioners, puts the doctrine in a rhetorical form, thus:

"Suppose wee saw with our eyes, for twenty or thirty yeers together, a great furnace of fire, of the quantity of the whole earth, & saw there *Cain*, *Judas*, *Ahitophel*, *Saul*, and all the damned as lumps of red fire, and they boyling and louping for pain in a dungeon of everlasting brimstone, and the black and terrible devils with long & sharp-tooth'd whips of Scorpions, lashing out scourges on them; and if we saw there our Neighbours, Brethren, Sisters, yea our dear Children, Wives, Fathers, and Mothers, swimming and sinking in that black Lake, and heard the yelling, shouting, crying of our yong ones and fathers, blaspheming the spotlesse Justice of God; if wee saw this while we are living here on Earth, we should not dare to offend the Majesty of God, but should hear, come to Christ, and beleeve and be saved. But the truth is, *If wee beleeve not Moses and the Prophets*, neither should wee beleeve for this." †

We have examined the writings of the other members of the Committee and have failed to find any evidence that these differed from Baylie, Rutherford, or their brethren of the third grand committee on this subject.

Dr. Burgess, through whose hands the Confession went in its final transcription, was the author of the book entitled "Baptismal Regeneration of Elect Infants," Oxford, 1629. There can be no doubt of his use of the term "elect infants." It is altogether likely that in the final transcription of the Confession, he made the change from "elect of infants" to "elect infants" as meaning the same thing. He takes the following position in his book:

* "Catechesis Elenctica Errorum," London, 1654, p. 36.

† "Tryal and Triumph of Faith," London, 1645, p. 36.

"*It is most agreeable to the Institution of Christ, that All Elect Infants that are baptized (unlesse in some extraordinary cases) doe, ordinarily, receive, from Christ, the Spirit in Baptisme, for their first solemne initiation into Christ, and for their future actuall renovation, in Gods good time, if they live to yeares of discretion, and enjoy the other ordinary meanes of Grace appointed of God to this end.*"* He also quotes the following extract from Dr. Thomas Taylor's "Commentary on Titus" with entire approval: "let us first *Distinguish* of *Infants;* of whom some be elected, and some belong not to the election of grace. These latter receive only the outward element, and are not inwardly washed: *The Former* receive, in the right use of the Sacrament, the *Inward Grace;* not that hereby we ty the Maiesty of God to any time or meanes, whose spirit bloweth when & where he listeth; on some before baptisme, who are sanctified from the womb; on some after: but because the *Lord Delighteth to Present Himselfe Gratious in his owne Ordinance;* we may conceive that in the right use of this Sacrament, *He Ordinarily Accompanieth It With his Grace: Here*, according to his *Promise*, we may expect it, and *Here* we *May* and *Ought* send out the prayer of *Faith* for it."†

It is evident that the change from "elect of infants" to "elect infants" was not occasioned by any differences of opinion as to the salvation of infants in these committees as distinguished from the grand committee.

We shall give a few additional witnesses from leading divines who were not members of these committees, and who may therefore be regarded as representing the other sections of the Westminster Assembly. We shall begin with the Prolocutor.

William Twisse, defending the doctrine of reprobation against Mr. Heard, says:

"If many thousands, even all the infants of Turkes and Sarazens dying in originall sinne, are tormented by him in Hell fire, is he to be accounted the father of cruelties for this? And I

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* Page 21. † Page 33.

professe I cannot devise a greater shew and appearance of cruelty, than in this. Now I beseech you consider the spirit that breatheth in this man (Heard); dares he censure God, as a Father of cruelties for executing eternall death upon them that are guilty of it?"*

One of the most influential divines in the Westminster Assembly was Stephen Marshall, the great preacher of the civil wars. Marshall preached a "Sermon of the Baptizing of Infants" in Westminster Abbey at a morning lecture in 1645. In this sermon he makes the following objection against the views of those who reject infant baptism:

"This opinion puts all Infants of *all Beleevers* into the self-same condition with the Infants of *Turks* and *Indians*, which they all readily acknowledge; and from thence, unavoidably, one of three things must follow—1. Either all of them are damned who die in their Infancy, being without the Covenant of Grace, having no part in Christ. Or, 2. All of them saved, as having no originall Sinne, and consequently needing no Saviour; which most of the Anabaptists in the world doe own, and therefore bring in all *Pelagianism*, *Universal Grace*, *Free-Will*, etc. Or, 3. That although they be tainted with Originall corruption, and so need a Saviour, Christ doth *pro beneplacito*, save *some* of the Infants of *Indians and Turks*, dying in their Infancy, as well as *some* of the Infants of *Christians*, and so carry salvation by Christ out of the Church, beyond the Covenant of Grace, where God never made any promise.

"That God hath made a promise to be the God of *Beleevers*, and of *their Seed*, we all know; but where the promise is to be found, that he will be the God of the seed of such parents who live and die his enemies, and their seed, not so much as called by the preaching of the Gospel, I know not.

"These men say the Covenant of Grace made to the *Jews*, differs from the Covenant made with *us;* but I desire to know whether in the *one*, or in the *other*, they find any promise of Sal-

* "The Riches of God's Love unto the Vessells of Mercy," Oxford, 1653, p. 135.

vation by Christ to any Infants dying in their Infancy, whose parents no way belonged to the Family of God, or Covenant of Grace."*

April 2, 1646, Stephen Marshall published "A defence of Infant Baptism in Answer to two Treatises and an Appendix to them concerning it lately published by John Tombes." For this work Marshall received a vote of thanks by the Westminster Assembly. He replies to Tombes thus:

"Next let us see how you avoid being goared by the three hornes of my Syllogisme. I said, all being left in the same condition, 1. *All must be saved.* Or 2. *All must bee damned.* Or 3. *God saves some of the Infants of the Turkes, and some of the Infants of beleevers pro beneplacito.*

"After some discourse of the two first of these, you deny the consequence: *It follows not* (say you) *God may save some, and those some may bee the Infants of beleevers, and none of the Infants of Turks and Indians.*

"Its true, a man that will may venture to say so; and if another will, he may venture to say, *That those some, are the Infants of Pagans, and not of Christians:* and hee that should say so, hath as good warrant for this, as you have for the other, *according to your principle.* But what's this to the question before us? I said, This *opinion* leaves them all in the like condition; *One having no more reference to a promise than another.*

"Now if you will avoid being goared by any of these three hornes, you should have shewed, that according to your opinion, there is some *promise* for some of the Infants of beleevers, though there be none for the Infants of Pagans. But instead of shewing how your doctrine and opinion leaves them: you tell me what God may possibly doe in his secret Counsell, which is altogether unknowne to us. But I perceive your selfe suspected this answer would not endure the tryall: and therefore you quarrell at that expression of mine, *That if any of the Infants, of such as live and die Pagans be saved by Christ; then salvation by Christ is carryed out of the Church, whereof God hath made no promise.*

* Page 7.

"Against this you except; 1. *That salvation is not carryed out of the invisible Church; though some Infants of Pagans should bee saved by Christ.*

"I answer, it's true; and I adde, That if any man shall say, *the Devils should be saved by Christ:* even that Opinion would not carry salvation out of the invisible Church. But Sir, we are enquiring after the salvation of them to whom a promise of salvation is made. Now when you can prove that God hath made a promise, that he will gather a number, or hath a number whose names are written in the Lambs book, although their Parents never knew Jesus Christ, nor themselves ever live to bee instructed, you may then perswade your Reader to beleeve, that even some of the Infants of Pagans dying in their Infancy belong to the invisible Church: and till then, you must give him leave to beleeve that this answer is brought in as a shift, onely to serve your present need."*

William Carter, a leading preacher among the Independents and a member of the Westminster Assembly, thus distinguishes between the children of believers and the children of unbelievers:

"That which made this difference was not to be found in that which was meerly natural; for the Jewes were borne in originall Sinne, and corrupted thereby as much as the Gentiles; but in something supernatural, namely, because the Jewes, though they were sinful too, yet they were under the means of grace, and they had God engaged by covenant to them and their children for their good. But as for the Gentiles, he left them to their natural condition, without such means to mend them, nor was God engaged so to them for their good; but they were under the curse of God, therefore they grew wild as a tree in the Wildernesse that hath none to order it. And so were all those that came of them, such children of such parents, alike under the curse of God in sinne, and not looked after or regarded by the Lord. . . . .

"Therefore I say, this is one thing which makes this difference between the children of beleevers, and of unbeleevers, that they are holy, and these common or unclean, because they are

* Pages 87, 88.

under such a word of blessing which these are not; yea though we cannot with certainty affirm of this or that Infant of a beleever that it is inherently holy yet holy as thus separated and differenced, from those who are common, by that word of blessing from God, under which they are. As we cannot upon certainty affirm of any particular person in the Church that he is inherently holy, because he may make a lye in his confession, yet of every such person we can say he is in that sense holy, namely, as separated unto God in that relation, and thereby differenced from those who are common or uncleane."*

Antony Tuckney was a leader among the Westminster divines. He was chiefly responsible for the Answers to the Questions on the Ten Commandments in the Larger Catechism, and was chairman of the Committee that prepared the Shorter Catechism. July 4, 1652, he preached at Cambridge a sermon on Acts iv. 2. This was published in 1654 under the title "None but Christ," with an Appendix discussing the salvation of — "1. Heathen; 2. Those of the Old World, the Jews and others before Christ; and 3. Such as die infants and idiots, etc., now under the gospel." This was written in answer to a book of Nathaniel Culverwell, entitled "Light of Nature," 1652, which advocated the salvation of some of the heathen.

"1. It cannot rationally be said, that there was an equall invincibility of ignorance in those *Heathens*, to that which is in *Infants* and *distracted persons*, which want the use of reason, which they had; and therefore might have made more use of it then they did; and therefore their sin was more wilful, and so made them more obnoxious to *Gods* wrath, which therefore these *Infants*, etc., as less guilty, may in reason better escape.

"2. How God worketh in, or dealeth with elect Infants, which dye in their infancy (for any thing that I have found) the *Scripture* speaks not so much, or so evidently, as for me (or it may be

* "The Covenant of God with Abraham opened," London, 1654, pp. 101, 102.

for any) to make any clear or firm determination of it. But yet so much as that we have thence ground to believe, that they being in the Covenant, they have the benefit of it, Acts iii. 25. Gen. xvii. 7.

"Whether God may not work and act faith in them then, (as he made *John Baptist* leap in the womb) which Beza, and others of our Divines deny, and others are not unwilling to grant, I dare not peremptorily determine. Yet this I may say, that he acteth in the souls of Believers *in articulo mortis*, when some of them are as little able to put forth an act of reason, as they were *in articulo nativitatis*. But the Scripture (for any thing that I know) speaks not of this, and therefore I forbear to speak any thing of it.

"Only (as I said) it giveth us ground to believe, that they being in the Covenant may be so wrapt up in it, as also to be wrapt up in the *bundle of life*, and did it give us but as good hopes of the *Heathens* (of whom it rather speaks very sadly) as it doth of such *Infants*, I should be as forward as any to perswade my self and others, that they were in a hopeful condition.

"For such infants, suppose they have not actual faith, so as to exert it, yet they may have it infused in the habit, they are born in the *Church*, and in the *Covenant*, and what the faith of the *Church*, and of their *believing parents* may avail them, I do not now particularly inquire into! . . . .

"And whereas mention was made of an *anticipating and preventing grace of God, by which without faith he might be saved*; I conceive and believe that it is abundant *anticipating and preventing grace*, when either in *Him* or in *any*, *God* beginneth and worketh faith to lay hold on *Christ*. But such a preventing grace as to accept us for *Christ sake without faith in Christ*, the Scripture mentioneth not, is a new *notion* of a *young Divine*, which without better proof must not command our belief, or impose upon our credulity." *

This passage also makes it clear that the Westminster divines did not mean to make the salvation of infants a different salvation from that of adults. The work of effectual calling is the same with reference to all the elect.

* "None but Christ," pp. 134–37.

The special mention of infants and incapables does not separate them from the work of effectual calling. It defines with reference to them that this calling is not in the ordinary way of "being outwardly called by the ministry of the word," but in an extraordinary way of being inwardly called by the Spirit, who "worketh when and where and how he pleaseth." The time, the place, and the mode of this effectual calling is not determined. As Tuckney does not venture to affirm that this takes place *in articulo mortis*, so the Confession does not define it. But as Tuckney states that it is a new notion of the young man Culverwell that there can be salvation without faith in Christ, and he preached his discourse against Culverwell's doctrine that some heathen might be saved, and contended that salvation was by faith in Christ only; so the Westminster Confession takes the position that "those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth";* and "God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: *nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.*"†

This section of the Confession was aimed expressly at the Antinomian doctrine of eternal justification, and it insists that there can be no justification until Christ has been applied by the Spirit and appropriated by faith. This doctrine of eternal justification without faith was urged at this time by John Saltmarsh, and is strongly opposed by Thomas Gataker in his "Shadowes without Substance," published in 1646, thus:

"*Christ* you say, *is ours without Faith; but we can not know*

* XI. 1. † XI. 4.

him to be ours but by believing; and you reject this under the title of *the Reformed opinion and more generall, that none are justified or partakers of salvation, but by faith.* And if *no conditions* at all be required for obtaining *Salvation* by *Christ* as was formerly affirmed by you, then neither *Faith* also: Yea, to this you come fully home, where you say, that *the Covenant now under the Gospel is such a kind of Covenant, as was established with Noah, Gen.* ix. 1 *clear against the strain of the old, wherein man was to have his life upon condition.* And in this your *Reply*, you deny *the receiving of Christ to be acknowledged by you as a condition.* And indeed, if the promise of salvation by Christ, be as *absolute* and free from all condition as that *Covenant* made with *Noah;* then may a man be saved by Christ, tho he never know or look after Christ; as he is sure never to perish by an *aecumenicall deluge*, tho he neither know nor believe, nor do ever heare of such a *Covenant* concerning it."*

"2. The Apostle telleth us in expresse terms, that he *believed in Christ; that he might be justified by Christ*, thereby implying that he was not *actually justified*, or had part in the justification procured and purchased by the death of Christ, until he *believed.* And albeit the ransome, whereby we are *freely* (in regard of our selves) *justified*, be wholly in Christ Jesus; yet is he said to be *set forth for an atonement unto us through faith in his blood;* nor where those *branches* of the *wild Olive*, which were taken to succeed in the roome of those who were broken off, *actually in Christ*, but *out of Christ*, untill upon their believing they were engraffed into Christ." †

It is very strange in recent times to see Protestant divines going against this essential doctrine of the Confession in their efforts to escape the doctrine of the damnation of infants. This movement seems to have been begun by Dr. Archibald Alexander. In his youth he was greatly influenced by the Baptists in Virginia; and when President of Hampden and Sidney College, in 1797–9, he was greatly troubled about infant baptism, and for a while discontinued its use. These influences

* "Shadowes without Substance," 1646, p. 13. † *l. c.*, p. 44.

led him to abandon the Calvinistic doctrine of the damnation of non-elect infants.

In a letter to Bishop Mead he says:

"As infants, according to the creed of all reformed churches, are infected with original sin, they cannot, without regeneration, be qualified for the happiness of heaven. Children dying in infancy, must therefore be regenerated without the instrumentality of the Word; and as the Holy Scriptures have not informed us that any of the human family departing in infancy will be lost, we are permitted to hope that all such will be saved."*

Dr. Alexander here teaches a new doctrine, namely, that all will be saved except those of whom the Holy Scriptures have informed us that they will be lost. Nothing is said about the faith of infants. He thinks that all such will be regenerated, and saved by regeneration. The Standards teach that only the elect will be saved, and that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation; but Dr. Alexander ignores faith and justification for infants, and makes regeneration the means of salvation for all those of whom Scripture does not tell us that they are lost. I do not see how we can confine this enlarged hope of regeneration to infants or even heathen, on the ground taken by Dr. Alexander.

This new doctrine of the universal salvation of infants is still further advanced by Dr. Charles Hodge, who teaches that:

"Faith is the condition of justification. That is, so far as adults are concerned, God does not impute the righteousness of Christ to the sinner, until and unless, he (through grace), receives and rests on Christ alone for his salvation."†

Thus by the clause "so far as adults are concerned," Dr. Hodge exempts infants from the exercise of faith.

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* "Life of Dr. Arch. Alexander," p. 584. New York, 1854. † III., p. 118.

This new doctrine reaches its culmination in the teaching of Dr. A. A. Hodge, who takes the position that: "in the justification, therefore, of that majority of the elect which die in infancy, personal faith does not mediate." *

And thus these American divines undermine the vital principle of the Reformation, Justification by faith only; for they teach that the majority of the elect are justified without faith. They go over into the Antinomian error of justification without faith. This error is tersely exposed by Wallis, the Westminster divine:

"That we are saved not only in the eternal decree without faith, but even in the execution, is strange divinity. For if without faith, then without Christ, for Christ is no further ours, than apprehended by faith. As for the eternal decree (of Election he means), it is true we are not through faith, elected to salvation, but we are elected to salvation through faith. Faith is not the cause of the decree, but faith is decreed to be the cause of salvation." †

The Westminster Standards allow no advance in theology in the direction of justification without faith. They do not define the time when the justification of elect infants and incapables takes place; they do not define the place where it takes place; they do not define the mode in which Christ is presented to the elect infant, and how the child exercises saving faith. They leave all these questions undetermined.

We are able to say that the Westminster divines were unanimous on this question of the salvation of elect infants only. We have examined the greater part of the writings of the Westminster divines, and have not been able to find any different opinion from the extracts we

* *Princeton Review*, 1878, p. 315. † "Truth Tried," 1642, pp. 95, 96.

have given. The Presbyterian churches have departed from their standards on this question, and it is simple honesty to acknowledge it. We are at liberty to amend the Confession, but we have no right to distort it and to pervert its grammatical and historical meaning.

The difficulty involved in the salvation of elect infants is: to define *when* the Spirit effectually calls them by "enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ." How "being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit" is the infant "thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it"? In the infant who lives to years of discretion we may see the operation of the divine Spirit in regeneration, renewal, and drawing him to Christ; and with regard to infants dying in infancy, we can understand that the dynamic work of regeneration has been wrought; but how can we conceive of the drawing to Jesus Christ, the answer to the call, the embracing of the grace freely offered, and the exercise of faith? The Westminster Standards leave all these questions unanswered for us, and we are free to speculate as much as we please, so long as we do not trench upon the substance of doctrine that has been defined. It is, however, contrary to the Westminster Confession to believe in the salvation of all infants, or to believe in the salvation of any of the heathen who are capable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

As late as 1728, Professor Simpson, of Glasgow, was charged with heresy for teaching

"that it is more than probable, that all unbaptized infants dying in infancy are saved, and that it is manifest, if God should deny his grace to all, or any of the children of infidels, he would deal more severely with them than he did with fallen angels."*

The doctrine of the extension of redemption to a few elect persons who are idiots and incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, to elect infants who might be baptized, and to the few of the children of believers who died unbaptized, might leave the time, place, and mode of their calling and acceptance of Christ undetermined. But the doctrine of the universal salvation of infants dying in infancy involves the doctrine that "heaven is in great measure composed of the souls of redeemed infants," and that "the majority of the elect die in infancy"; and "that the vast majority of our race are saved, not in the ordinary way of the outward call by the ministry of the Word, but in an extraordinary way, without that outward call.†

This extension of salvation, vastly beyond what the Westminster divines contemplated, constrains us to ask what that extraordinary way is, and how it may be reconciled with the ordinary way of salvation, or how the two ways may be comprehended in a greater whole.

As Dr. Prentiss says:

"The change from the position generally held by Calvinistic divines at the beginning, or in the middle of the seventeenth century, to the ground taken by Dr. Charles Hodge, in 1871, in his 'Systematic Theology' is simply immense. It amounts to a sort of revolution in theological opinion, a revolution all the more noteworthy from the quiet, decisive way in which it was at last accomplished, the general acquiescence in it, and also the apparent unconsciousness of its logical consequences."‡

* "Case of Professor Simpson," Edinburgh, 1728. † See p. 174.

‡ *Presbyterian Review*, iv., p. 556.

If the Church has failed thus far to advance to the inevitable consequences of this doctrine, it cannot refrain much longer from it. It must either recede to the Westminster position, or, having abandoned it for a new doctrine, it must give good reasons for the new doctrine, justify it by evidence from Scripture, and make the reconstruction of the related doctrines that is necessarily involved.

We do not hesitate to express our dissent from the Westminster Confession in this limitation of the divine electing grace. We are of the opinion that God's electing grace saves all infants, and not a few of the heathen. We base our right to differ from the Westminster divines on their own fundamental principle, that the electing grace of God is not tied to the administration of the ordinary means of grace.

But it is vain to construct the doctrine of the universal redemption of infants on the ruins of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith only. It is not necessary to destroy the Christian doctrine of the order of redemption through Christ. The relief is to be found in a more comprehensive view of redemption, and an extension of the gracious operations of God into the middle state, between death and the resurrection, where the order of salvation, begun for infants and others in regeneration, may be conducted through all the processes of justification by faith, adoption, sanctification by repentance, and glorification in love and holiness, in the communion of God and the Messiah.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

In such ways as these recent Protestant divines undermine and destroy the vital principle of the Reformation, justification by faith only.

The doctrine of justification is also injured by the neglect of the doctrine of forgiveness of sin.

Luther says:

"What we need to learn is that we become righteous and are released from sins, by the forgiveness of sins. . . . . Christian righteousness is nothing without the forgiveness of sins."*

Calvin says:

"The righteousness of faith is a reconciliation with God which consists solely in remission of sins. . . . . It appears, then, that those whom God receives, are made righteous no otherwise than as they are purified by being cleansed from all their defilements by the remission of their sins; so that such a righteousness may, in one word, be denominated a remission of sins."†

Turretine leads the way in the departure from the faith of the Reformation as to forgiveness of sins, and many recent divines follow him into worse error. This is so well stated by Principal D. W. Simon, that I shall simply quote him:

"*Dr. C. Hodge* leaves us in no doubt as to his view of the matter, though one cannot but be surprised how little is said expressly on the subject of the 'forgiveness of sin,'—nay more, how rarely the expression occurs,—considering the stress laid on it, not only in the Scriptures, but also by the early Protestant divines. The official conception of God and his relation to men may be said to have reached its climax in his system: 'Men may philosophize about the nature of God, his relation to his creatures, and the terms on which he will *forgive sin*, and they may never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion; but when the question is simply, What do the Scriptures teach on this subject? the matter is comparatively easy. In the Old Testament and in the New, God is declared to be just, in the sense that His nature demands the punishment of sin: that, therefore, there can be no remission without such punishment, vicarious or personal; that the plan of salvation symbolically and typically exhibited in the

* Köstlin's "Luther's Theologie," vol. ii., p. 445. "Luther's Werke," v. s. 247.

† "Institutes," iii. 11, 21.

Mosaic institution, expounded in the prophets, and clearly and variously taught in the New Testament, involves the substitution of the incarnate Son of God in the place of sinners, who assumed their obligation to satisfy divine justice, and that He did in fact make a full and perfect satisfaction for sin, bearing the penalty of the law in their stead.' *

"'Redemption is deliverance from evil by the payment of a ransom. The price paid for our ransom is Christ.' † 'Justification cannot be mere pardon' ‡ for justification is a forensic procedure, a 'judicial act.' § *'A pardoned criminal is not only just as much a criminal as he was before, but his sense of guilt and remorse of conscience are in no degree lessened. Pardon can remove only the outward and arbitrary penalty. The sting of sin remains.'* ‖

"And this is the theology that claims to be *par excellence*, Biblical and 'orthodox,' according to the recognized standards and divines of Protestantism!" ¶

(2). We have already seen that the climax of this departure from the faith of the Reformation has been attained by Dr. A. A. Hodge. He changes the order of salvation in an Antinomian direction. This error is so tersely exposed by Dr. Shedd that I shall simply quote him:

"Dr. Hodge asserts that 'justification must precede regeneration' (p. 340); that 'regeneration follows immediately upon being received into the favor of God on the condition (ground?) of Christ's righteousness' (p. 341); and that 'faith is the necessary source of regeneration' (p. 343). This is not the teaching of the Westminster standards, to say nothing of Scripture, respecting the order of regeneration and justification. According to these, justification is preceded by effectual calling. 'Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth' (Confess., xii. 1). But effectual calling *includes regeneration*, which constitutes a part of it. 'They who are effectually called and

* "Systematic Theology," vol. ii., pp. 478 *seq.* † *l. c.*, p. 514.

‡ *l. c.*, vol. iii., p. 125. § Vol. iii., p. 126. ‖ Vol. iii., p. 128.

¶ "Redemption of Man," pp. 280–281. See also pp. 95–96 of this chapter.

regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them' (Confess., xiii. 1). Regeneration is that part of effectual calling which is described as 'savingly enlightening the mind and renewing and powerfully determining the will, so that the elect are thereby made willing and able freely to answer God's call and embrace the grace offered therein' (*l. c.* 67). Prior to this imparting of Divine life to the soul dead in sin, neither faith nor repentance (the two converting acts) is possible. By it the elect have 'the grace of faith whereby they are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls' (Confession, xiv. 1). Regeneration is thus plainly taught to be prior to the act of faith in the order of salvation, and faith is unquestionably prior to justification. An unbeliever cannot be justified. Justifying faith is a product of regeneration, and cannot, therefore, be the 'source' of it, as Dr. Hodge asserts. There is nothing either in Scripture or the Westminster symbols to support the view that God first 'changes the relation of the justified person to the law, and receives him into His favor on the condition of an imputed righteousness, and then regeneration follows immediately upon this' (p. 341). If this be so, it would follow either that God justifies a person prior to faith in Christ and without faith, or else that an unregenerate person can exercise saving faith—which latter position is denied over and over again in the Westminster standards." *

These specimens of modern errors might be increased in number, but we have given a sufficient number to show that leading divines have greatly injured the Westminster system, partly by neglecting important doctrines, but chiefly by excess in speculation; and that there are many errors of this kind that must be removed from the minds of the ministry and the people, ere they can clearly understand the Westminster Confession, or the Faith of the Reformation, or can make any true progress in theology.

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* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. viii., p. 758.

CHAPTER VI.

FAILURES.

THE second group of chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith embraces those doctrines which Orthodoxism has failed to recognize and value. These are:

XII. Of Adoption. 1 section.
XIII. Of Sanctification. 3 sections.
XIV. Of Saving Faith. 3 sections.
XV. Of Repentance unto Life. 6 sections.
XVI. Of Good Works. 7 sections.
XVII. Of the Perseverance of the Saints. 3 sections.
XVIII. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation. 4 sections.
XIX. Of the Law of God. 7 sections.
XX. Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience. 4 sections.
XXI. Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day. 8 sections.
XXII. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows. 7 sections.

Total of 53 sections.

As the first group of doctrines, considered in our last chapter, gives us the doctrines upon which scholastic Calvinists have ever laid the greatest stress, this group gives us the most characteristic features of Puritanism, and exhibits the advance that the second Reformation made beyond the first Reformation and the orthodoxy of the continent of Europe.

It is evident at a glance that these doctrines have been neglected by modern evangelical divines. But

no one can estimate the extent of their departure from the faith of their fathers until he has considered them in some detail.

It is sometimes said that Presbyterians never get beyond a certain chapter of the epistle to the Romans. It might be said with more propriety that they do not go beyond the eleventh chapter of the Confession of Faith. If the tendency of the Church at present is to advance in an ethical direction, then true progress is not only to study the closing chapters of the epistle to the Romans, but also the characteristic doctrines of Puritanism contained in the eleven chapters that make up the middle section of the Westminster Confession.

It is instructive to observe how Dr. Charles Hodge deals with these doctrines. In his "Systematic Theology" he has a chapter on Sanctification, in which he also treats of Good Works, making in all 46 pages; he expounds the Law of God on the basis of the Catechisms in 207 pages, but passes over the general doctrine of the Law as given in the Confession; he discusses Saving Faith and Assurance, briefly, in 17 pages under the head of Justification; and this is all he attempts to do with these grand chapters of Puritanism. Dr. Charles Hodge is not the only delinquent here. He simply discloses the general attitude of the Presbyterian Church to these doctrines.

ADOPTION.

The doctrine of Adoption is passed over altogether by Dr. Charles Hodge. Dr. A. A. Hodge is obliged to consider it in his "Exposition of the Confession of Faith," but the three pages given to it are striking in their meagre and unsatisfactory statements. His brief discussion in his Outlines is little better. The scholastic divines have

so exaggerated divine sovereignty and salvation in its relations to the divine justice, that they have little conception of the vital relation between Christ and His people established in redemption, and of the divine Fatherhood and human sonship involved therein. The whole process of salvation is to them so mechanical, objective, and external, that they do not apprehend the deeper and more comprehensive relations of the redemption of mankind. The Fatherhood of God is one of the most precious doctrines of the Scriptures, and we rejoice that it has its due place and importance in the Westminster Symbols; but the people have been deprived of its comfort, until recent times, by the neglect of it in the teaching of so-called orthodox divines.

The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was brought into prominence by the debate between the two Scottish theologians, Dr. Candlish and Prof. Crawford. Both of these divines gave their attention simultaneously to this important doctrine. Dr. Candlish made it the theme of his Cunningham Lecture, and claimed that he was not merely reviving an old doctrine, but making an advance in theology in his exposition of it. Dr. Candlish says:

"But if this relation of sonship, as shared by the Son with his disciples, has suffered from its close connection with regeneration not having been sufficiently recognised, it has suffered perhaps still more seriously from so many of our theologians having failed to recognise sufficiently its entire distinction and separation from justification. The two have, to a large extent, been confounded and mixed up together. What God does in the act of adoption has been so represented as to make it either a part of what he does in the act of justification or a mere appendage and necessary corollary involved in that act." *

Prof. Crawford agrees with Dr. Candlish as to the im-

* "Fatherhood of God," Edin., 1867, p. 237.

portance of the doctrine and its discrimination from justification. These two divines differ chiefly on the question of the natural Fatherhood of God as embracing all men. This Prof. Crawford correctly affirms and strongly maintains against Dr. Candlish. At the same time he carefully discriminates the gracious Fatherhood of the redeemed from the natural Fatherhood of all men. Turretine, here as elsewhere, led the older divines into error. He included Adoption under Justification, and in this was followed by Hill, Dick, Dabney, and others.

Dr. Candlish claims that Adoption in the Westminster Standards

"is left in the last degree vague and indefinite." . . . . "I hold them, therefore, to have virtually left the whole of that department of theology which bears on God's paternal relation to his people, and their filial relation to him, an entirely open question, —a perfect *tabula rasa*,—so far as any verdict or deliverance of theirs is concerned. I consider that we have the fullest liberty to sink new shafts in this mine, which they evidently had not explored, if only we take care that our diggings shall do no damage to any of the far more important mines which they did explore,—and explored so thoroughly and so well."*

Some of the positions taken by Dr. Candlish were new, but in the main he and Prof. Crawford simply reaffirm the Westminster doctrine of the gracious Fatherhood of God. Dr. Candlish is certainly incorrect in his statement that the Westminster Confession is "vague and indefinite." I think that any one who will read such old Puritan writers as Francis Roberts and John Ball will see that the doctrine of adoption was very prominent in their minds. The fact, that the Westminster Confession gives the doctrine a separate chap-

* "Fatherhood of God," Edin., 1867, pp. 286, 287.

ter, is an evidence of their estimate of its importance. Dr. Candlish was looking at the Westminster Standards through the glasses of his own age, and was unconsciously imputing to the Westminster divines the faults of their successors in the 18th century.

The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was so neglected in the 18th century that, in its modern revival in the 19th century, it looked to most people as a new doctrine, and was opposed by not a few theologians as a novelty and error. Others hailed it as a new inspiration from heaven. Mr. Heard goes so far as to say that:

"Among the lost truths which the New Theology has recovered from oblivion, there is perhaps none so central and none so vital as that of the Fatherhood of God; it is the key-stone of the arch on which the whole theology of the coming age is to spring up." *

But Mr. Heard, and others who have preceded him, exaggerate the universal Fatherhood of God in His relation to our entire race, and do not give the gracious Fatherhood of God its proper value. The older theologians certainly failed in their appreciation of this universal Fatherhood, but they did not fail in their conception of the gracious Fatherhood. The theology of the 18th century failed in both. It is only fair to state, however, that some at least of the Westminster divines knew how to make the proper distinctions in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. As Dr. A. F. Mitchell has well said:

"The very phrase which some suppose to be an invention of his (Dr. Crawford), or some modern Calvinist, was not unknown to the divines of the Assembly. Dr. Harris, in a sermon preached before the House of Commons, from Luke xviii. 6, 7, 8, says: 'God's adversaries are in some way his own. He is a piece of a

* "Old and New Theology," p. 82. Edin.: T. & T. Clark, 1885.

Father to them also. For he is a common Father by office to all, a special Father by adoption to saints, a singular Father by nature to Christ. A Prince, besides his particular relation to his children, is *pater patriæ* . . . . and is good to all, though with a difference. So here, though Christ hath purchased a peculiar people to himself, to the purpose of salvation, yet others taste of his goodness.'" *

SANCTIFICATION.

The chapter on Sanctification is one of the finest in the Confession. It was framed over against errors in this department that were then rampant in England, and that have ever since troubled the churches of Great Britain and America. The chief forms of error, as regards sanctification, were among the various schools of Antinomians. The Westminster definition of sanctification is given in chap. xiii.:

"They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

"II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life: there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

"III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

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* "Minutes of the Westminster Assembly," Introd. lxiii.

The order of salvation is the same for every one that is redeemed. The work of sanctification follows the acts of justification and adoption. Sanctification is a work that is carried on by God in a gradual process until perfect holiness has been attained by man. This doctrine rules out the Antinomian doctrine of immediate sanctification. Sanctification is a work carried on by the divine grace until its end is accomplished in mankind. It is not immediate at the beginning of the Christian life, it cannot be immediate at any stage of the Christian life. It is not a progressive work for a certain period of time and then suddenly transformed into an act, as many Arminians and semi-Arminians teach. Some dogmatic divines are sound in their advocacy of progressive sanctification over against these errors of Antinomianism and Arminianism; but they commit an error of no less serious consequences when they affirm that sanctification becomes immediate at death. The Confession makes no such statement as this. Immediate sanctification at death is an error added on to the orthodox doctrine of sanctification that makes it inconsistent, and virtually destroys it. It is true that the Confession states that sanctification is "yet imperfect in this life," and that "without true holiness no man shall see the Lord"; but it does not say that man is made perfect at the moment of death. The progress in sanctification goes on after death in the middle state, until it is perfected there, and man is prepared by the processes of grace for the final judgment.

Dr. A. A. Hodge also commits an error when he says: "The inward means of sanctification is faith." * "The sole *internal* means or condition of salvation is faith *in*

* "Commentary on Confession of Faith," p. 266.

or *on* Christ." * The Confession takes a different position. It does not introduce faith into the definition of sanctification at all, except so far as it is included in "all saving graces," in which man is "more and more quickened and strengthened." These saving graces are especially "Saving Faith" and "Repentance unto Life," as they are defined in chapters xiv. and xv. of the Confession. There is reason to believe that repentance has the same relation to sanctification as faith has to justification.

Furthermore, we take exception to the strong statement that "sanctification is never perfected in this life." † The Confession simply states that it is "yet imperfect in this life." This we believe, so far as the past experience of mankind is concerned, and also so far as the present circumstances of mankind are concerned. But the Confession does not take the position that "sanctification will *never* be perfect in this life." The time is coming, as we believe, when the Church and individual Christians may be able to attain that ideal of holiness in this life. Entire sanctification is commanded and held up as the ideal of Christianity; and we must recognize that it is a possibility under divine grace; and that possibility will ultimately be attained. To say that it will *never* be perfected in this life (1) paralyzes all efforts for entire sanctification in this world; (2) takes the erroneous position that there will be unsanctified Christians on the earth at the day of judgment; (3) makes sanctification an immediate act of God, either at the hour of death for the dead, or at the hour of judgment for the living; which really destroys the doctrine of progressive sanctification altogether. It is not strange that so little progress in

* "Presbyterian Doctrine," p. 27.

† C. Hodge, *l. c.*, iii. 245; A. A. Hodge, *l. c.*, p. 265.

sanctification has been made with these errors obstructing the way. They must be removed in order to advance in a holy life.

SAVING FAITH.

The chapter on Saving Faith is of great excellence. The dogmatic divines have so expended their strength upon faith, as the instrument of justification; and have so narrowed and confined its meaning, in order to avoid errors in the doctrine of justification; that they have considered it merely in its first exercise, as the hand grasping the righteousness of God. One must really read such works as John Ball's "Treatise of Faith," and Rutherford's "Trial and Triumph of Faith," in order to apprehend what were the views of the Westminster divines on this subject. The Westminster definition, in chap. xiv., is a model of its kind:

"II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

This section of the Confession teaches that it is the same kind of saving faith that recognizes the authority of God Himself speaking in the Scriptures, and that accepts Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and glorification. Rutherford understood this when he wrote:

"To the new Creature, there is in *Christ's* Word some character, some sound of Heaven, that is in no voyce in the world, but in his only, in *Christ* represented to a believer's eye of Faith;

there is a shape, and a stampe of Divine Majesty, no man knoweth it, but the believer; and in Heaven and Earth, Christ hath not a Marrow like himselfe. Suppose there were an hundred counterfeit Moones, or fancied Sunnes in the Heaven, a naturall eye can discerne the true Moone, and the naturall Sun from them all; the eye knoweth white not to be blacke, nor green. *Christ* offered to the eye of Faith, stampeth on faith's eye, speces, little Images of *Christ*, that the soule dare goe to Death, and to Hell with it; this, this only was *Christ*, and none other but he only." *

How different A. A. Hodge, when he says:

"Saving faith receives as true all the contents of God's word, without exception. After we have settled the preliminary questions as to what books belong to the inspired canon of Scripture, and as to what is the original text of those books, then the whole must be received as equally the word of God, and must in all its parts be accepted with equal faith." †

The antithesis to the Confession here springs into the eye. What has Saving Faith to do with these preliminary questions of Biblical criticism? They are in the field of scientific theology. Saving Faith goes directly to God, when the sacred writings are presented to it; it finds God in them and does not raise or consider questions of criticism.

The next section of the Confession also gives a statement of vast importance:

"III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith."

This doctrine of growth in saving faith, is one of the distinguishing features of Calvinism, and one of the most important achievements of Puritanism. It is based on

* "Tryal and Triumph of Faith," p. 98.

† *l. c.*, pp. 279, 280.

the teachings of Jesus and His discrimination of the several kinds of faith. It is one of the most practical doctrines for the life and experience of every Christian. And yet the dogmatic divines ignore it, and the ministers seldom touch upon it. The effort of the Church seems to be directed chiefly to this, to induce men to simple justifying faith, and to get them to begin the Christian life. Most Christians have no conception of the wonderful possibilities of growth in faith, of the comfort that there is in store for those who are strong in faith, the joy of the victorious faith, and the holy peace of those who have attained a full assurance through Christ.

It is high time for Christian teachers to raise the banner of progressive religion, in which there shall be an advance in faith and sanctification. Salvation is only begun with simple faith and justification. If these do not advance, by growth in faith and sanctification, they discredit themselves and excite doubt as to their reality and vitality.

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

This is one of the most characteristic doctrines of Puritanism, and one of the most important features of Protestant Christianity, and yet it has been so neglected by Protestant divines, that Dr. Charles Hodge, in his immense work on "Systematic Theology," has no room for it at all. The Confession divides the theme into six sections, each of which is a gem of Christian theology and Christian experience. But all this is beyond the range of Traditional Orthodoxy.

Dr. Dabney has recently recognized this defect. He says: "The brevity and in some cases, neglect with which this prominent subject is treated by many systems is surprising and reprehensible." *

* "Theology," p. 657.

This doctrine is so fundamental that Luther made it the first of the theses he nailed upon the ancient church door at Wittenberg, as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says repent, he means that the whole life of believers upon earth should be a constant and perpetual repentance." In these words Luther struck the key-note of the Reformation;—he gave the master word that begins every reformation in the life of the individual and every advance in public religion. Luther learned this word from the Bible. There are many words that are technical in Christian theology that are not found in the Scriptures; but Repentance is all over the Bible, and is so plain that the most ignorant cannot escape it. On this account, it has exerted its influence upon Protestant students of the Bible, notwithstanding the teachings of dogmaticians. There has, however, been great neglect of the doctrine of repentance in the modern Church. There have been several reasons for this state of things. In the time of the Reformation the conflict was so carried on that it was necessary to separate faith from works, and justification from sanctification. This resulted in an evil tendency in Protestantism that went so far as to exaggerate justification by faith only, and to underrate sanctification, repentance, and good works. This narrowing of the original basis of reform was the chief reason why Staupitz, the teacher of Luther, and other evangelical men of his school, were compelled to break with Luther and his Reformation.

The Puritan Reformation, however, had as its aim to maintain a pure doctrine, a pure church, and a pure and holy life. Hence great stress was laid upon repentance. But the second Reformation passed through a similar experience to the first Reformation, and its advance in

Christian theology was abandoned, and narrower views prevailed. Antinomianism gained such ground in Great Britain that Methodism attacked Calvinism itself as essentially Antinomianism; and the Marrow men were ruled out by the orthodox in Scotland. The Methodists revived many of the characteristic features of Puritanism, and magnified the doctrines of sanctification and repentance. Jonathan Edwards is noteworthy for the stress he lays upon these topics. But the anti-Methodists resisted these doctrines and insisted upon the narrower scholastic divinity.*

Methodism greatly emphasized the doctrine of regeneration, and so exaggerated the conviction of sin, that the holy life of repentance that followed them, was again neglected, and the dogmaticians led the ministry and the people back to the narrower views of the older scholastic divines. There can be no real revival, no solid progress in theology, that does not begin with repentance. What is faith alone worth at the beginning of a Christian life, if it is not followed by repentance that governs the whole life? What is the benefit of justification if it does not open the door to sanctification? Why should a man be regenerated if he is not to grow in grace? Why go through the agonies of conviction of sin if he is not to battle against sin until it is entirely put away? Repentance and sanctification govern the whole life of the Christian from the first moment of conversion until the day of ultimate judgment. Progressive Christianity must overcome these faults of orthodoxism, and by a reaffirmation of repentance begin a new reformation that will take up the work which the earlier

* Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 238 *seq.*

reformations left incomplete, and carry it on to perfection.

GOOD WORKS.

The Westminster Confession adheres to the Protestant doctrine of good works, making those careful definitions and distinctions that divide the Reformed Churches from the Church of Rome. It is a very remarkable development in modern Protestantism, that the principle of evangelical freedom should be so generally abandoned with its doctrines of repentance, sanctification, and holy love; and that a puritanical and scholastic legalism should have arisen in its place, in which the sense of duty and obligation to the law of God dominate the Christian life. The Westminster Confession (chap. xvi.) states that:

> "Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention."

It needs but a slight familiarity with the history of the Presbyterian Church, the reading of the Digest of the General Assembly, or attendance upon any General Assembly in recent years, to convince any one that the General Assembly has repeatedly violated this section of the Constitution, by prohibiting certain things that are not prohibited by the Word of God, and by commanding what the sacred Scriptures do not command. The Presbyterian Church in the United States was divided on the question of the sin of slavery. The Southern Presbyterian Church was certainly correct in the position, that slavery is not forbidden in the Word of God; and that, therefore, according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, the General Assem-

bly had no right to forbid it. Every Act against slavery in the minutes of the General Assemblies has been a violation of this section of the Westminster Confession.

The Presbyterian Church is not agreed on the question of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. Certainly the sacred Scriptures do not prescribe total abstinence, and therefore the Presbyterian Church has no right to prescribe it. Every deliverance of General Assemblies in favor of total abstinence has violated this law of the Confession of Faith. Dr. Charles Hodge correctly expounded the Confession when he said:

"Nothing that the Bible pronounces true can be false; nothing that it declares to be false can be true; nothing is obligatory on the conscience but what it enjoins; nothing can be sin but what it condemns. If, therefore, the Scriptures under the Old Dispensation permitted men to hold slaves, and if the New Testament nowhere condemns slave-holding, but prescribes the relative duties of masters and slaves, then to pronounce slave-holding to be in itself sinful is contrary to the Scriptures. In like manner, if the Bible nowhere condemns the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, if our Lord himself drank wine, then to say that all use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage is sin, is only one of the many forms of the infidelity of benevolence. It is as much contrary to our allegiance to the Bible to make our own notions of right or wrong the rule of duty as to make our own reason the rule of faith."*

It would not be difficult to find other examples of this modern spirit of legalism that has taken possession of synods, General Assemblies, and eminent Presbyterian divines, and impelled them to violate the Confession of Faith. Doubtless these men had "good intention," and in some cases at least these actions were "devised by men out of blind zeal"; but these do not constitute valid grounds for definitions of good works.

* A. A. Hodge, "Life of Charles Hodge," p. 334. N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons.

I shall not discuss the right or wrong of slavery or total abstinence or any other of these questions of morals and casuistry. The point I have to make is that the Westminster standards make the Word of God the sole arbiter of good works. This Protestant position was taken over against the Roman Catholic doctrine, that the Church could frame a code of morals, and that there were counsels of perfection in addition to divine commands. In my opinion the Westminster statement is too strict here. There are good works other than those that "God hath commanded in his holy word," and there are sins not "forbidden in the sacred Scriptures." The Westminster divines themselves, in their exposition of the Ten Commands in the Larger Catechism, exceed the specifications of Scripture, and violate their own rule. There are general principles of Christian ethics given in the Scriptures that lead to a higher Christian morality in our century than was possible to the Christian mind several centuries ago. Doubtless the coming centuries will have enlightened consciences that will be far beyond our highest conceptions of Christian holiness. All this ethical progress is stimulated and guided by the Scripture. But these higher ethical precepts are not laid down in the Scripture, and cannot be required of men on the authority of the Scriptures.

There is also an element of truth in the Roman Catholic distinction between divine commands and counsels of perfection, which is based on the teachings of Jesus and of Paul, that does not involve the Roman Catholic heresy of works of supererogation. The school of Staupitz rightly recognized this distinction, and the Lutherans erred in rejecting it. The Church did not err for fifteen centuries in this distinction. All men are not required to make the sacrifices for Christ that some are

glad to make under the call and grace of God. There are grades in Christian perfection. There is no dead level in the holy life. Protestantism should reopen this question, and use this ancient distinction in its own scheme of Christian ethics.

The modern Presbyterian Church has departed from the Westminster divines in its standard of morals and good works, and there is lack of definite views among the ministry and the theologians in the whole department of Christian ethics. The whole doctrine of Sanctification is in confusion.

THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE

We pass over the chapter on the perseverance of the saints, with the simple remark that this chapter has not been neglected by the dogmaticians. They have battled over it on account of its connection with the doctrine of election and predestination. At the same time, they have not given the doctrine its proper place between repentance and good works on the one side and assurance of grace on the other. With undue stress on the doctrine of perseverance, there has been a strange neglect of the doctrine of assurance. This has been the result of the neglect of the degrees of faith in the doctrine of saving faith, and of repentance and sanctification. A Methodist minister some years ago insisted to me that Presbyterians did not believe in the doctrine of assurance. I could hardly convince him by reading to him the statement of the Confession of Faith. He said that he had never met a Presbyterian who believed the doctrine; that Presbyterians only hoped they were saved, but were never assured of their salvation. My observation and inquiries have led me to the opinion, that in the main the Methodist minister was correct. The ministry

and people of the Presbyterian Church have not as a rule sought assurance of grace and salvation as it has ever been their privilege and duty to do. The Reformed doctrine that "this infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it" (xviii. 3): has induced the mass of Presbyterians to rest content with the possession of simple justifying faith. They have not realized the grace of adoption and "the testimony of the Spirit of adoption"; they have not advanced in the grace of sanctification and so have not "the inward evidences of those graces unto which these promises are made."

THE LAW OF GOD.

The chapter on the Law of God gives the general principles upon which the Law of God is interpreted. The interpretation itself is not given in the Confession, but in the Larger Catechism. Dr. Charles Hodge, in his "Systematic Theology," follows the Larger Catechism, but does not consider the principles laid down in the Confession. The Confession teaches that the moral law contained in the Ten Commands is of perpetual obligation, but that "all the ceremonial, political, and judicial laws of the Old Testament have been abrogated." The law of the Ten Commands is the only Old Testament law that is binding on Christians. Those ministers and theologians who teach that any other laws of the Old Testament legislation are binding, whether contained in the priest code, the deuteronomic code, or the covenant codes, transgress this principle of the Confession. There is a large amount of transgression of the Confession at this point, especially in the sermonic literature.

The uses of the law are very carefully defined in an

evangelical manner. The law is a rule of life informing us of the will of God, discovering our sins, and showing us the rewards and penalties of obedience and disobedience—but it is not as a covenant of works to justify or condemn: for "the spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done" (xix. 7).

These principles are excellent, but the Larger Catechism, by its undue elaboration of the Ten Commands, sets an example for Protestant legalists to follow; so that, it is to be feared evangelical liberty has too often been swallowed up in legal obligation.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

The chapter on Christian Liberty is in some respects the noblest part of the Confession of Faith. In it are wrapt up the experiences of a century of struggle for liberty of conscience. It involves the principles upon which British Christianity has unfolded since the 17th century.

This Christian Liberty is based on freedom from the guilt of sin, from bondage to the law, from the dominion of sin and "boldness of access to the throne of grace and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God." On this freedom of sonship is based the great Puritan principle:

> "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith and an absolute obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also" (xx. 2).

If these noble words had been heeded, history would not have recorded those sad divisions that have distracted Presbyterianism and retarded its growth. The conflicts in the Presbyterian Church and the divisions that have resulted therefrom, have been due to the efforts of dogmaticians and ecclesiastics, who have endeavored to make their private opinions, or the tenets of their party, the laws of the Church and the tests of orthodoxy.

The conscience of a child of God cannot be bound by anything that God Himself does not speak in His Holy Word to the believer himself. This makes the Scriptures, or rather God in the Scriptures, the only arbiter.*

Those who exalt the Confession of Faith above the Scriptures, transgress the doctrine of the Confession itself, which limits its authority to those things in which it is in accord with the Scriptures. Those who exalt their school of theology above the Scriptures and the Confession, sin against both Confession and Scripture; and this is practically the sin that a large proportion of Presbyterian ministers are unconsciously committing at the present time. If this principle of Christian liberty were followed, the systems of divinity now in use would sink in value, the ministry would again expound the Confession and give more attention to the study of the Scriptures. If this principle were followed still further, the Confession itself would be found to be even more inadequate as an expression of the doctrines of the Bible than the Westminster divines themselves could imagine. They revised the Articles of the Church of England and made a new Confession. It is hardly probable that they supposed that their descendants would wait two cen-

* This statement is in entire concord with chap. i. 10.

turies and a half without any attempt at a thorough revision of their Confession, or an effort to make a new one in its stead.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

The Westminster divines were very anxious to reform the worship of God's people in accordance with the Word of God. They gave great attention to this matter in their Directory for Worship. They laid down the general principles of worship in the Confession.*

They also strongly urged the observance of the Sabbath. This was one of the chief marks of the Puritan party in the Church of England.† We have already observed that the modern Presbyterians have entirely changed their attitude in this matter of worship.‡ This change is evident also in the doctrine of the Sabbath. The Puritan doctrine of the Confession was hardened into a puritanical doctrine. The Puritan doctrine of the Sabbath rested upon the words of Moses and Jesus that the day was essentially a day of worship; to which abstinence from labor, and rest must yield as subordinate principles. But the puritanical theory of the Sabbath, that still prevails in some quarters, reiterates the Pharisaic doctrine of the Sabbath, and makes abstinence from labor the most important thing, and vexes the ministry and people with numberless questions of casuistry.

The chapters on Lawful Oaths and Vows is another chapter under the head of worship. The doctrine of oaths is maintained over against the various Societies of Friends and Anabaptists. The doctrine of vows is also based upon the sacred Scriptures. The Confession opposes "Popish" vows, but urges the evangelical vow.

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* Chap. xxi.

† Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 48 *seq.*

‡ See also pp. 48 *seq.*

"It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto" (xxii. 6).

There are two parties in the Church at the present time. The one party makes great use of the vow, as in Total Abstinence, in the White Cross movement, and in the Christian Endeavor Society. Whatever may be said as to their excessive use of the Vow, they are certainly not in conflict with the Westminster Confession, or the sacred Scriptures in their doctrine of the vow. The only question we can raise is whether the vows they propose are proper vows.

There is another party that is so hostile to such vows as these that they oppose all vows, even those that are usually taken at confirmation and at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This party in the Presbyterian Church is in plain transgression of the doctrine of the vow in the Confession of Faith.

We have gone over the eleven chapters that make up the central section of the Westminster Confession. We have seen a general neglect of these precious doctrines by the Traditional Orthodoxy. The current Orthodoxism has fallen sadly short of the Westminster ideal. As it erred by excessive definition in the first eleven chapters, it has erred by a general failure in the second eleven chapters, so that the Presbyterian Church at the present time is at an angle with its Confession of Faith; and subscription to the Westminster system in the historic sense is out of the question.

CHAPTER VII.

Departures.

We have seen that in the first eleven chapters of the Westminster Confession modern Traditionalism errs chiefly by excessive definition; that in the second group of eleven chapters orthodoxism errs by failure and neglect; we shall now find in the last group of eleven chapters errors in the direction of heterodoxy, meaning by heterodoxy, doctrines that depart from those set forth in these chapters of the Confession. We might express the differences in more technical language by saying that in the first eleven chapters, orthodoxism is extra-confessional; in the second eleven chapters, infra-confessional; and in the third eleven chapters, contra-confessional. The chapters of this group are as follows:

XXIII. Of the Civil Magistrate. 4 sections.
XXIV. Of Marriage and Divorce. 6 sections.
XXV. Of the Church. 6 sections.
XXVI. Of the Communion of Saints. 3 sections.
XXVII. Of the Sacraments. 5 sections.
XXVIII. Of Baptism. 7 sections.
XXIX. Of the Lord's Supper. 8 sections.
XXX. Of Church Censures. 4 sections.
XXXI. Of Synods and Councils. 4 sections.
XXXII. Of the State of Man after Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead. 3 sections.
XXXIII. Of the Last Judgment. 3 sections.
Total of 53 sections.

We shall consider nine of these in this chapter, re-

serving the last two chapters of the Confession for separate discussion.

CHURCH AND STATE.

The American Presbyterian Church entirely revised the chapter of the Confession relating to the Christian magistrate. It also expunged from the Confession (xx. 4) the clause, "and by the power of the civil magistrate." This section combines Church and State in the previous context:

"They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as either in their own nature or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive of the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church [and by the power of the civil magistrate]," (xx. 4).

The section as amended leaves to the Church the right to proceed against all those who *oppose the civil authority* by rebellion or by violations of civil law, but does not recognize the right of the civil magistrate to act either in civil or in ecclesiastical matters. It justifies all the so-called civil declarations of the Northern General Assemblies, and is against the doctrine of the Southern Presbyterian Church. But the doctrine of the Confession ought to be so stated that the civil government should be recognized in its legitimate sphere, and the boundaries of the civil and ecclesiastical government should be defined. The American Episcopal Church give the doctrine in much better form in the article:

"The power of the civil magistrate extendeth to all men, as well clergy as laity, in all things temporal, but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel, to pay respectful obedience to the civil authority, regularly and legitimately constituted" (xxxvii.).

The American Presbyterians in this matter departed from the doctrine of the Westminster Confession and the practice of the Presbyterian Churches of the Old World; they exclude the civil magistrate from interference with violations of civil as well as ecclesiastical authority. But it certainly was not meant to imply that the civil magistrate had no authority over violations of civil authority. They did not notice that this error would result from their omission. It was designed to exclude the civil authority from interfering with violations of religious doctrines and customs. But what shall we say to the punishment of a Jew for the violation of the Christian Sabbath, or of the punishment of an infidel for blasphemy, or of a Mormon or Mohammedan for polygamy, or of a Protestant for disobedience to the ecclesiastical doctrine of marriage and divorce? If the English common law rules in the United States, and that makes us a Christian nation, there are some restrictions upon this exclusion of the civil magistrate from the sphere of religious beliefs and practices.

The American doctrine of Church and State comes out more distinctly in the substitution made for xxiii. 3 and xxxi. 1 of the Westminster Confession. In the first of these, the relation of the civil magistrate to the Church is defined. The Synod agreed with the Westminster divines that the civil magistrate should not assume the administration of the Word and sacraments or discipline. The American Synod add,—a statement

of what the civil magistrate might *not* do,—"*or in the least interfere in matters of faith.*"

The Westminster divines taught the doctrine of an *established national Church.* Accordingly, it is the duty of the magistrate

"To take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed" (xxiii. 3).

When the American Synod removed this doctrine from our Standards, they made a radical departure in faith and practice. The doctrines of *one national Church*, of *national religion*, of *unity* of doctrine and worship, of the support of the Church by the State, and the use of its strong arm in its behalf—all these doctrines of the ages were swept away at once. Instead of them, the American Synod recognized a variety of denominations of Christians with equal rights, liberty of religious opinion and practice, and abandoned civil support and a national religion. This is the significant language in which they set forth these new doctrines:

"Yet as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger" (xxiii. 3).

They not only took ground against a *national* establishment of religion, but also advanced to the position, (1) that there should be no establishment of religion in any of the sovereign States of the Republic, and (2) that there should be no legislation of those States in

favor of any denomination or against any denomination, but that (3) there should be entire religious equality under the law.

The idea of the *unity of the Church* and the value of a *national religion* have been overlooked by American Christians. They have not been able to appreciate the immense advantages that come to a nation in which these great ideas are prominent in the minds of the people. It is only in recent years that Americans are awaking to the importance of these considerations.

There is at least one body of Christians in whom these ideals are regarded as essential doctrine. The Roman Catholic Church can never consent to the American Protestant doctrine of the separation of Church and State. In so far as the American States have adopted this doctrine, they have proclaimed a doctrine and have established a practice that are against the fundamental principles of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not true, therefore, that our State Governments are non-committal on the doctrines in dispute between the Churches. They *have "interfered in matters of faith,"* for this doctrine of the union of Church and State is as much a matter of faith as the doctrines of the Trinity or Justification by Faith. They could not do otherwise. They were obliged to take a decided position on one side of this great question of Christendom. They have in fact rejected the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and also the doctrine of all the Established Churches of Europe, as to the relation of Church and State, and they have adopted the doctrine of the American Protestant denominations. The States are therefore in this respect really *Protestant* States, and indeed *American Protestant States.*

The Roman Catholic Church will make strong and

persistent efforts to overcome this Protestant feature of our State Governments. It will continue this struggle, with the end in view of establishing the Roman Catholic Church as the religion of the States. It will aim to secure legislation in favor of the Roman Catholic Church, and against Protestantism. *Religious equality, freedom of worship*, and co-ordination of different denominations destructive of the unity and authority of the Church, will never be permitted by Rome if she can help it. She cannot recognize the toleration of such doctrines by the State. We ought not to blame the Roman Catholic Church for her political efforts. She cannot do otherwise without renouncing her fundamental doctrines.

The difficulties that Protestantism has to contend with here, are very great. If there is anything in a *national religion* and the *unity of the Church* of Jesus Christ, it is high time that American Protestantism should rise to the situation, grasp the problem, and endeavor to solve it. The ideals of *Christian unity* and a *national religion* are rising into greater prominence in American Christianity.

The good fruits of the work of the Synod of 1788 are many. Protestantism has had its golden period of blessed opportunities. The Protestant Churches have grown with wonderful rapidity in the use of the freedom, religious equality, and protection that have been guaranteed to them. All of the American denominations have shown that a free Church in a free State has greater powers of expansion, has greater facilities for keeping itself pure and sound, than any established Church has ever exhibited. At the same time this expansion is at the cost of an immense amount of friction and waste, and these efforts to preserve a sound doctrine and uniformity of government and worship, result

in the multiplication of denominations, and the perpetuation of errors in doctrine, government, and worship, in organized societies outside the older denominations.

But notwithstanding all the good effects of the separation of Church and State, no thinking man can contemplate the present situation without alarm. It is clear that there cannot be an absolute separation of Church and State. There are a large number of the most important interests that are common to the Church and the State, such as marriage and divorce, education, religious days, public oaths and prayers, and the like. On all of these questions the Roman Catholic Church has a well-defined doctrine, and works upon a uniform theory. Protestantism is sadly divided, and is at a great disadvantage in the discussion. What is the best course to pursue? Is the American doctrine of Church and State to be advanced so as to do away with a national religion, even in the general and hazy sense in which it can now be maintained that we are a Christian nation? Or is the American idea to give way to the Roman Catholic, and are we in the future to see one State after another establishing the Roman Catholic Church? There is nothing to prevent such action except a sufficient majority of the people to vote down any such amendments to the State Constitutions, if they should be proposed. If neither of these extremes is to be taken, it would seem to be necessary to make a better definition of the relation of Church and State than that given us by the Presbyterian Synod of 1788. Their revision in this clause, as in the other, was altogether too sweeping. It needs limitation and restrictions, if faith and practice are to correspond.

According to the Westminster divines, synods or councils could meet only when called by the civil au-

thority, which was to be present at them, and provide that whatever was transacted in them should be according to the mind of God. They were to meet on their own authority only when the magistrates were open enemies to the Church. According to the American doctrine, the synods and councils are to meet together under the authority and call of the authorities of the Churches, and the civil magistrate has nothing to do with them. "No law in any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder the due exercise thereof among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief." The duty of the magistrate is to protect them, and prevent interference by others. Thus the Church is sovereign, and entirely independent of the State. But here again the Church and State come in contact in many ways. It is not so easy to hold them apart in practice as in theory. In all questions of property, and where pecuniary relations come into consideration, and damage is done to the reputations of men by the action of the ecclesiastical courts, the State is still supreme over any ecclesiastical decisions and determinations. There are certain definitions and limitations that the Church should make to its own powers, if it would always be in accordance with the laws of the land. Such definitions would tend to prevent hasty and inconsiderate action, especially in presbyteries, which sometimes have an exalted idea of their own sovereignty; and would warn them not to take any action in violation of any civil rights, or material interests, or the religious liberty and freedom of opinion and doctrinal development, within the limits of the constitution of the Church. None of these rights of a minister or layman may be infringed with impunity by any ecclesiastical

court. The civil courts will see to it, that the Church does not violate its own constitution, and that it does its members no wrong.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

The chapter relating to marriage and divorce expresses the views of the Westminster divines on that subject; but these views do not altogether correspond with the doctrines and practices of modern society.

(*a*). Monogamy is the law of modern society, although it is not explicitly commanded by the divine Word. It does not raise any questions of difficulty except among the Mormons in Utah, and among the missionaries to the heathen. But here it is a serious question whether a man should be compelled to abandon all his wives except one, and whether wives should be forced to separate from their husbands, in the transition from polygamy to monogamy, when there is no explicit law against polygamy in the Bible.

(*b*). The limitations to marriage are not so observed as to make their violation cases of discipline in the Presbyterian Church. No one thinks of going any further than to advise that "it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists or other idolaters."* No Presbyterian minister forbids such marriages, or deals with them in the way of discipline. The language of the Confession here is unduly polemical against Roman Catholics, and transcends the authority of the Scriptures.

(*c*). The Westminster divines were not consistent with themselves when they made the Levitical laws of mar-

* Chap. xxiv. 3.

riage a rule for Christians. The American Presbyterian Church was troubled for many years by the prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, that was contained in the Confession of Faith.*

The Northern and Southern Churches in recent years removed this prohibition from the Confession by striking out the clause: "The man may not marry one of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own: nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own." This law was disregarded by many of our most eminent ministers and laymen for years before it was blotted out. It ought never to have been put into the Confession, because it rested upon a mistaken interpretation of the Levitical code. But this revision ought to have gone farther and the references to the Levitical code in the proof-texts should have been stricken out—for, according to the statement of chapter xix., only the moral law written in the two tables of the Ten Commandments is binding on Christians, the Levitical code having been abrogated under the New Testament. The Westminster Confession was inconsistent with itself in affirming the obligation of the Levitical code of marriage.†

(*d*). There are great differences of opinion on the subject of divorce. The Confession limits divorce to adultery and wilful desertion.‡ But the laws of most American States extend the privileges of divorce to those who are injured in many other ways than the two mentioned in the Confession. It is not conceded by all exegetes that our Saviour means to limit divorce to the technical sin of adultery. If this be so, it is difficult to see how a conflict can be avoided between Christ and the teachings

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* Chap. xxiv. 4. † See p. 154. ‡ Chap. xxiv. 6.

of Paul. The Confession certainly adds Paul's reason to that given by Jesus. If, now, the adultery as given by Jesus is to be so extended as to include the wilful desertion of Paul, what barrier is there in principle to prevent its extension still further, so as to cover other cases of internal rupture of the marriage relation, such as personal violence and abuse, habitual intoxication, and criminal conduct?* There is a lack of harmony between the Church and State in this matter, which results in great injury to good morals.

THE CHURCH.

The Westminster doctrine of the Church is admirable in all its definitions. It has not been revised so far as the statements of the Confession are concerned; but it has been revised in the teachings and life of a considerable number of the Presbyterian ministry and people. There are several important differences that have developed under this head.

(1). The Premillenarians take exception to the doctrine that the visible Church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.† They hold that Christ will not ascend His throne and will not establish His kingdom until the second advent.‡

(2). There are many divines who object to the statement that the Pope of Rome is "that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God,"§ not only on the ground that it is not true in fact, but

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* See Dorner, "Sittenlehre," Berlin, 1885, s. 500. † Chap. xxv. 2.

‡ See E. R. Craven, "Excursus Basileia," pp. 93 *seq.* of his edition of Lange's "Commentary on Revelation," N. Y., 1874.

§ Chap. xxv. 6.

also on the ground that this statement of the Confession is a false interpretation of 2 Thessalonians ii. 3, 4.*

(3). But the most serious departure from the Westminster doctrine is made by those who deny the unity and catholicity of the visible Church. The Westminster definition is admirable:

"The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law,) consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (xxv. 2).

The visible Church is composed of all professing the true religion and no others. There is no ordinary possibility of salvation to others. This shuts out the heathen world and their offspring, all who are not professing Christians, with the exception of imbeciles, and such others as, owing to providential circumstances, are unable to attach themselves to the visible Church. In this statement the Westminster Confession is consistent with its doctrine as to effectual calling of elect infants and other elect persons, and as to the exclusion of the heathen.† The following extract will show how far an eminent Presbyterian divine has departed from this doctrine:

"You see that organization cannot be the essence of the Church. I tell you that the infinite majority of the spiritual Church of Jesus Christ come into existence outside of all organization. Through all the ages, from Japan, from China, from India, from Africa, from the islands of the sea, age after age, multitudes flocking like birds have gone to heaven of this great company of redeemed infants of the Church of God; they go without organization. Now, this is demonstration; that, if the

* See p. 185. † See pp. 120 *seq.*

great majority of the Church always has existed outside of organization, then organization, while of assistance, is not essential to the Church. You may add church to church; these are but the incidental forms which the universal Church of God assumes on different occasions under the guidance of the Spirit, under the guidance of God's providence as a great propaganda for the purpose of accomplishing the great and divine work of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth."*

(4). We shall consider, under the head of the Church, the chapters on Church censures (xxx.) and Synods and Councils (xxxi.), because these are really an elaboration of the principles of the chapter just considered. Their doctrine is what may be called a *jure divino* Presbyterianism. The Westminster divines thought that they had found in the Scriptures the Presbyterian platform of church government. No one can doubt their conscientiousness in the matter, who has any familiarity with their writings. The *jure divino* theory of church government was then held by the Episcopalians and Independents as well as the Presbyterians. Their differences were not in the theory of the divine authority for church government, but in the interpretation of the passages of Scripture upon which they built their theories. The fundamental theory of the Westminster divines that all church government must derive its authority from the Scriptures has been abandoned by the vast majority of modern Presbyterians. They have not revised the statements of the Confession on this subject, but they are entirely out of harmony with them.

The introductory statement under the head of Church Censures is very significant:

"The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct

* A. A. Hodge's "Popular Lectures," p. 208.

from the civil magistrate." II. "To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require" (xxx. 1, 2).

The Confession of Faith does not go into details in the enumeration of the officers of the Church. This was reserved for the Form of Government, in which every statement is fortified by passages of Scripture to prove divine authority for it.

The Westminster Assembly came into conflict with Parliament just here. The Westminster Assembly sent up to Parliament their advice as "to keeping away scandalous and unworthy persons from the Lord's table," enumerating certain sins. Parliament passed an ordinance authorizing certain commissioners, by them appointed, to decide in "cases not enumerated." The Westminster Assembly, on March 23, 1645, sent up a petition to Parliament affirming that

"The provision of commissioners to judge of scandals, not enumerated, appears to their consciences to be so contrary to that way of government which Christ hath appointed in his Church, in that it giveth power to judge of persons to come to the sacrament, unto such as Christ hath not given that power." . . . . "That the power of judging in cases not enumerated, and to keep back from the sacrament all such as are notoriously scandalous, doth belong to the several elderships by divine right, and by the will and appointment of Christ." *

Parliament regarded this petition as a breach of the privileges of Parliament, and sent down nine questions for them to answer as regards the *jure divino*. The Assembly began discussing these questions, but were allowed occasionally to lay them aside for more im-

* "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," p. 457.

portant matters connected with the composition of the doctrinal Standards. They were, however, answered by the Provincial Assembly of London in an official document * signed by the moderator and clerks:

The Provincial Assembly of London herein maintained that "'there is a Church Government of divine right under the New Testament,' that the *rule* of that Government is *Holy Scripture*, the fountain of it *Jesus Christ as mediator;* that it is a *spiritual power* or *authority* derived from Jesus Christ, and exercised by church *officers*, endowed by Him; that the several acts of this power are public prayer and thanksgiving, singing of Psalms, public ministry of the Word of God in the congregation, in reading the Scriptures and singing, the catechetical propounding or expounding of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, the ordination of Presbyters with imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, the authoritative discerning and judging of doctrine according to the Word of God, admonition and public rebuke of sinners; rejecting, purging out, or putting away from the communion of the Church, wicked and incorrigible persons. seasonable remitting, receiving, comforting, and authoritative confirming again in the communion of the Church, those that are penitent, taking special care for relief of the necessities and distresses of the poor and afflicted members of the Church. The end of this government is the edifying of the Church of Christ. The receptacle of this power of church government is not the civil magistrate as the Erastians contend, nor the *coetus fidelium* or body of the people, as presbyterated, or unpresbyterated as the Separatists and Independents pretend, but *Christ's own officers* which He hath created *jure divino* in His Church. These officers are, (1) pastors and teachers; (2) ruling elders; (3) deacons. The power of the keys or proper ecclesiastical power is distributed among these church officers so that the deacons have the care of the poor, the ruling elders and pastors combine the power of jurisdiction, the pastors and teachers the preaching of the Word and administration of sacraments. The Presbytery is

* This was published under the title, "Jus divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici"; or "The Divine Right of Church Government asserted and evidenced by the Holy Scriptures," London, 1646.

the body of ruling elders and pastors having this power of jurisdiction which may be the lesser assemblies, consisting of the ministers and ruling elders in each single congregation, called the Parochial presbytery, or congregational eldership, and the greater assemblies consisting of church governors *sent* from several churches and united into one body for government of all those churches within their own bounds. These greater assemblies are either presbyterial or synodal,—presbyterial consisting of the ministers and elders of several adjacent or neighboring single congregations or parish churches, called the presbytery or classical presbytery; synodal consisting of ministers and elders sent from presbyterial assemblies to consult and conclude about matters of common and great concernment to the Church within their limits, and these are either *Provincial*, embracing ministers and elders from several presbyteries within one province; *National*, ministers and elders from several provinces within one nation; and *Œcumenical*, ministers and elders from the several nations within the whole Christian world. These are all of divine right, and there is a divine right of appeals from the lower to the higher bodies, and of the subordination of the lower to the higher in the authoritative judging and determining of causes ecclesiastical." *

These doctrines of the Provincial Assembly of London and of the Westminster Assembly are no longer the doctrines of American Presbyterians. This will be clear from the following extract from Dr. A. A. Hodge:

"There are not two churches, the one visible and the other invisible. There is, and can be ever, but one single, indivisible Church of Jesus Christ." † . . . . "The permanent results of biblical interpretation unite with the history of Christ's providential and gracious guidance of the churches in proving that he never intended to impose upon the Church as a whole any particular form of organization. Neither he nor his apostles ever went beyond the suggestion of general principles and actual inauguration of a few rudimentary forms." . . . . "The Church

* Briggs' "Provincial Assembly of London," *Presbyterian Review*, ii., pp. 54 *seq.*

† "Popular Lectures," p. 300.

exists antecedently to and independently of any organization, and its far larger part, embracing all mankind of all centuries dying in infancy, extends indefinitely beyond all organizations. All the more it is certain that no special form can be essential to the existence, or even to the integrity, of the Church." *

THE SACRAMENTS.

The chapters of the Westminster Confession relating to the sacraments are admirable definitions. They maintain the Calvinistic doctrine over against the Roman Catholics and Lutherans on the one hand, and the Zwinglian theory on the other. The sacraments are not merely "holy signs," but they are also "seals of the covenant of grace." They not merely "represent Christ and his benefits," but they "confirm our interest in him." They not only exhibit grace, but they confer grace.

"The Grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept, authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers" (xxvii. 3).

This section of the Confession has been departed from in several items of doctrine.

A considerable proportion of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church hold low views of the sacraments, regarding them as signs, but not as seals, looking upon them as symbols, but not as real means for conferring divine grace.

The Westminster statements carefully exclude the error that the grace of God is conferred *ex opere operato* by the mere use of the sacraments, and affirm the free

* "Popular Lectures," pp. 304–5.

grace of God, which may use the sacraments or not as seems to Him best in His administration of grace. As God is free on the one hand, so man is free on the other. The grace of God is not conferred on unworthy persons who use the sacraments. Personal faith is required in order to receive the grace of God that is conferred by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and there must be a worthiness for all who are to receive the sacrament of regeneration. They must be in the covenant of grace as believers or the children of believers. If there be present the divine intention to confer grace and sacramental worthiness, then the grace is really conferred by the sacraments.

"The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves."*

Hence it is that a Westminster divine—such as Cornelius Burgess, the vice-president of the Westminster Assembly—could write a book entitled "Baptismal Regeneration of Elect Infants"; and that the Westminster Directory instructs the minister at the Lord's table to say, "Take ye, eat ye; this is the body of Christ, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of him." The doctrine of baptismal regeneration and of the real presence of Christ at the Lord's table are as truly in the Westminster Standards as they are in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. In the conflict with Episcopalians, Presbyterians have gradually drifted away from their own standards.

* "Larger Catechism," Quest. 177.

As Dr. A. F. Mitchell well says:

"The doctrine taught in chapters xxvii., xxviii., and xxix., as to the nature of the sacraments generally, and of the Lord's Supper especially, is such as could have grown up nowhere else so surely as on British soil, where the truth was slowly and gradually developed in the minds of the Reformers, was watered by the blood of the martyrs, and so was finally and firmly rooted in the affections of their countrymen. It is, in brief, the teaching of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley; of Hooker, Ussher, and many others, their true-hearted successors in the South, as well as of Knox, who, from his long residence in England, and with English exiles on the Continent, has thoroughly caught up their warm and catholic utterances. This teaching is as far removed from the bare remembrance theory attributed to the early Swiss Reformers, as from the consubstantiation of Luther and the local or supra-local presence contended for by Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics. It is so spiritual, yet so really satisfying, that even some High Churchmen have owned that it would be difficult to find a better directory in the study of questions relating to this sacrament than is supplied in the Confession of Faith; while those of another school freely grant that, on the doctrine of the sacraments, they 'do not perceive a shade of difference from the teaching of the Church of England.' The language throughout chapter xxix. is as nearly as possible identical with that of the Irish Articles."*

ROMAN CATHOLIC BAPTISM.

There has been a departure from the Westminster doctrine of the sacraments in the Presbyterian Church, by the new theory that Roman Catholic baptism is invalid.

The General Assembly in 1790 made a deliverance upon the subject of the validity of baptism, which is in entire harmony with the Reformed faith and practice. The members of that Assembly were those who framed the constitution of the American Presbyterian Church,

* "Minutes of Sessions of Westminster Assembly," Introduction, p. lxviii.

and knew what they were doing when they made this wise deliverance:

"*Resolved*, That it is a principle of the Church that the unworthiness of the ministers of the gospel does not invalidate the ordinances of religion dispensed by them. It is also a principle that as long as any denomination of Christians is acknowledged by us as a Church of Christ, we ought to hold the ordinances dispensed by it as valid, notwithstanding the unworthiness of particular ministers. Yet, inasmuch as no general rule can be made to embrace all circumstances, there may be irregularities in particular administrations by men not yet divested of their office, either in this or in other churches, which may render them null and void. But as these irregularities must often result from circumstances and situations that cannot be anticipated and pointed out in the rule, they must be left to be judged of by the prudence and wisdom of church sessions and the higher judicatories to which they may be referred."*

There are three important statements in this deliverance: (1), The unworthiness of ministers does not invalidate the ordinances; (2), none but a Christian Church can administer Christian ordinances; (3), there may be irregularities in the administration of ordinances which render them invalid.

(1). The first statement is in accordance with the Confession:

"Neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorising the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers" (xxvii. 3).

It is the teaching of the Westminster Standards that the sacrament of baptism is efficacious to worthy receivers. Hence a repetition of the sacrament is impossible. The form may be repeated, but the work of the

* W. E. Moore, "Presbyterian Digest," 1873, p. 659.

Spirit, which it seals, is but once. A repetition of a valid baptism dishonors it, and is to that extent a sin against the Holy Ghost, who makes a valid baptism efficacious. Hence the Westminster Confession says: "The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person." * As Herbert Palmer, the chief author of the Larger Catechism, says: "Baptism is to be administered to any one once, and no more; because as we can be born but once naturally, so but once spiritually." † Stephen Marshall, the great preacher of the Westminster Assembly, arguing against John Tombs, the leading English Baptist of the seventeenth century, represents that rebaptizing is against "the uncontradicted custom of all the ancient Church, with whom it was numbered among heresies to reiterate a baptism which was acknowledged to be valid." ‡

The validity of Roman Catholic baptism does not depend upon the worthiness or the piety of the ministry of the Church. All Reformed Churches distinguish between the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy. They do not deny that the Roman Catholic priests are ministers, but they deny that they are priests, diocesan bishops, archbishops, or popes. They recognize the ministry, but refuse the hierarchy. This is admirably represented in an official document of the Provincial Assembly of London:

"We distinguish between a defective ministrie and a false ministrie, as we do between a man that is lame or blind and a man that is but the picture of a man. We do not deny but that the way of ministers entering into the ministrie by the bishops, had many defects in it, for which they ought to be humbled: but we add, that notwithstanding all the accidental corruptions,

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* xxviii. 7. † Catechism, p. 41.

‡ "Defence of Infant Baptism," London, 1646, p. 68.

yet it is not substantially and essentially corrupted. As it is with baptism in the Popish church; all orthodox divines account it valid, though mingled with much dross, because the party baptized, is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. And therefore when a Papist turns Protestant, he is not baptized again, because the substance of baptism is preserved in Popery under many defects."*

(2). The second statement of the Assembly of 1790, is that none but a Christian Church can administer ordinances. The Roman Catholic Church is a Church of Jesus Christ. This is clear from the Westminster doctrine of the Church.†

There can be no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church is embraced in these definitions. The members of the Roman Catholic Church profess the true religion, and are not excluded from the ordinary possibility of salvation. Those who might venture to put into the phrase "true religion" the Protestant faith and order, would violate the historic usage of terms, and are debarred by the distinction in the definition of the Catholic Church between the "more or less pure" churches.

Those are in error who adduce sections five and six, as if they separated the Roman Catholic Church from the previous definition.

There is no evidence that the authors of the Standards designed the Roman Catholic Church by the phrase "no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." The plural, "church*es*," is against that opinion. Furthermore, there is a clear distinction between the *Pope of Rome* and the Roman Catholic *Church*. He is represented as Antichrist exalting himself "*in* the church." This clearly implies that the Roman Catholic Church is

* "Vindication of the Presbyterian Government and Ministry," 1650, p. 143.

† xxv. 2–6.

a Church. The Pope is the man of sin enthroned *in the Church* in place of Jesus Christ. He is not enthroned in Protestant Churches. He is enthroned in the Roman Catholic Church alone. That this is the meaning of the Standards is clear from an official document of the Westminster Assembly itself, in which they reply to the Dissenting brethren:

"If our brethren meane by *Antichrist or the man of sinne*, that which the Reformed Churches have generally understood, namely, the *Papacy*, we do not think but that in the great differences between them and us, the light already revealed is clear and sufficient enough for conviction, and manifesting of the errors thereof." *

The Protestant Reformers and the Westminster divines were bent upon reforming a corrupt Church, and they represented the hierarchy and the errors and abuses of the Roman Catholic Church as anti-Christian. But the Anabaptists and the later Brownist Separatists withdrew from the Catholic Church itself, and denounced all the national Churches and their ordinances as anti-Christian. Anabaptism, Katabaptism, Rebaptism, (the same thing under different names,) was the most characteristic feature of the radical movement which meant deformation and destruction of all the historical Churches.

Lazarus Seaman, a leading Westminster divine, in his argument against Edmund Chillendon, in vindication of the judgment of the Reformed Churches and Protestant divines from misrepresentations concerning ordination and laying on of hands, quotes with approval the following extract from Francis Johnson:

"The Anabaptists holding that Antichrist hath utterly destroyed all God's ordinances, so as there was not so much as true

* "Papers for Accomodation," 1644, London, 1648, p. 112.

baptisme reteined and had among them (*i. e.*, in Rome or England), thereupon they began to baptize themselves again. Whose errors, while we confuted, and while some of them objected that we should no more retain the baptisme then the ministry there received: we had just occasion thereupon to consider thereof; and so weighing with ourselves that one main and speciall reason against Rebaptization is, because baptisme is an ordinance of God which has had in the Church of *Rome* before she fell into apostasie, and hath been there continued ever since the Apostle's times (however it be commingled among them with many corruptions and inventions of their own), we began to consider Whether the like might not be observed and said concerning imposition of hands; that it was had from the Apostles in the Church of Rome before her apostasie, and is there continued to this day, though mixed with many pollutions and devises of their own." *

Thus far the American Presbyterian Church remained in full accord with the Standards, but the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1835, violated the Confession in its deliverance:

"*Resolved*, That it is a deliberate and decided judgment of this Assembly, that the Roman Catholic Church has essentially apostatized from the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot be recognized as a Christian Church." †

This language is indefensible on historic or constitutional grounds. And yet it was made in hostility to Roman Catholic education, and was not designed to apply to the question of baptism.

This General Assembly led the Church in a drift of error. The General Assembly of 1845 (O. S.) went so far as to declare:

"That no rite administered by one who is not himself a duly ordained minister of the true Church of God visible, can be re-

* "Vindication of the Judgement of the Reformed Churches," London, 1647, p. 53.

† "Minutes," p. 33.

garded as an ordinance of Christ, whatever be the name by which it is called, whatever the form employed in its administration. The so-called priests of the Romish communion are not ministers of Christ, for they are commissioned as agents of the papal hierarchy, which is not a church of Christ, but the Man of Sin, apostate from the truth, the enemy of righteousness and of God. She has lain long under the curse of God, who has called his people to come out from her, that they be not partakers of her plagues." *

This General Assembly had the audacity to throw itself athwart the consensus of the Reformed Churches and proclaim the heretical doctrine that Roman Catholic baptism is invalid. But this General Assembly was composed of a faction in the Presbyterian Church. Its deliverance was an expression of the errors of the men who made it. It was happily not a judicial decision, and had no binding force in the denomination whose minutes it defiled. It was the work of the same set of men who had violated the constitution of the American Presbyterian Church, and by an act of violence had brought about the division. They had drifted from the consensus of the Reformed faith and historic Presbyterianism into the principles of Anabaptism and the Brownist separation. They were guilty of this violation of the Reformed faith and the Presbyterian practice, owing to their ignorance of Presbyterian history, their intense dogmatism and devotion to *a priori* logic, which used the Westminster Standards and the sacred Scriptures as a storehouse of arguments for foregone conclusions and pre-established prejudices. Charles Hodge nobly breasted the tide and strove to overcome this error, as well as other errors of the men with whom he was compelled by circumstances to co-operate, but his appeals to history and reason were drowned in the cries of fanaticism and intolerance.

* "Minutes," p. 35.

The New School branch of the Presbyterian Church never compromised itself with this heresy. The New School Presbyterians followed the lead of Henry B. Smith, and adhered to the historic faith of the Church. Hence it is that the reunited Church was happily relieved of the burden of the heretical deliverance of 1845.

The General Assembly of 1879 endeavored to correct the error of 1835 by the following declaration:

"*Resolved*, That this Assembly, in full accordance with the words of our Confession of Faith respecting the Church of Rome and its so-called spiritual head, do now reaffirm the deliverance upon this subject of the Assembly of 1835, as applying to that Roman hierarchy headed by the Pope, falsely claiming to be the Church, which, opposed absolutely and irreconcilably to the doctrines of Holy Scripture, is corrupting and degrading a large part of Christ's Church over which it has usurped supreme control." *

This deliverance is in close conformity with the constitution and the historic faith of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

The maturest Westminster view of the Roman Catholic Church is presented in the following careful statements:

"There are some amongst us that refuse to hear our ministers because they were ordained (as they say) by Antichristian bishops, and think they are bound in conscience to renounce our ministry till we have renounced our ordination. And as the Antipædobaptists would rebaptize all that are baptized among us: so the Brownists would reordain all that are ordained amongst us. For our parts, we are confident that there is neither warrant out of the Word of God for rebaptization nor reordination." † . . . . "It hath pleased God out of his infinite wisdom and providence to continue the two great ordinances of

* "Minutes," p. 630.

† "Jus Divinum," 1654, ii., p. 1.

baptism and ordination sound for the substantials of them in the Church of Rome, even in their greatest apostacy. We deny not but they have been exceedingly bemuddled and corrupted, *Baptism*, with very many superstitious ceremonies, as of oyl, spittle, crossings, etc.; *Ordination*, with giving power to the party ordained to make the body of Christ, etc. But yet the substantials have been preserved. Children were baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. And the parties ordained had power given them to preach the Word of God. Now the Protestant religion doth not teach us to renounce baptism received in the Church of Rome, neither is a Papist, when converted Protestant, rebaptized. Nor doth it teach us simply and absolutely to renounce ordination; but it deals with it as the Jewes were to do with a captive maid when they had a mind to marrie her. They must shave her head and pare her nailes and put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and then take her to wife. So doth the Protestant Reformed Religion. It distinguisheth between the ordinances of God and the corruptions cleaving unto the ordinances. It washeth away all the defilements and pollutions contracted in the Church of Rome, both from baptism and ordination, but it doth not renounce either the one or the other." *

We have presented sufficient evidence to show that the Westminster divines regarded Roman Catholic baptism as valid; and that they regarded it as heretical and a mark of Anabaptism to deny its validity and to rebaptize. We claim that the Westminster Presbyterian divines were unanimous in this opinion. The Westminster Standards which the Westminster divines framed, cannot be made to teach a doctrine which its authors regarded as heretical. How absurd it is for Presbyterians to torture the Standards to prove an error which is repudiated by the unanimous consent of the Reformers and the Presbyterian fathers! What respectable name can be produced to offset the authorities which we have

* "Jus Divinum," 1654, ii., p. 54.

quoted at the risk of wearying our readers? It is high time that this fanatical opposition to Roman Catholic baptism should cease. It is high time that this heretical tendency to Anabaptism should be banished from the Presbyterian Church.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

Dr. Van Dyke has recently called attention to the serious departures from the Standards, in the current low views of the sacraments in the Presbyterian Church.* These contra-confessional opinions are not confined to the ordinary ministry and people; but leading divines, such as the late Principal Cunningham, of the Free Church of Scotland, and Dr. Dabney, the leading theologian of the Southern Presbyterian Church, share in them. As Dr. Crawford said some years ago:

"It is much to be regretted that the extreme jealousy that is felt among us of anything like the notion of an *opus operatum* in this sacrament should have disposed many to fall into the opposite error of well-nigh denying any efficacy to baptism as a means of imparting spiritual benefits to those who receive it, and of regarding it in no higher light than that of a mere form of admission into the visible Church. The prevalence of such low views of the efficacy of baptism is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of its proving efficacious."†

It is probable that the most general departure from the Westminster doctrine of the sacraments is in the lack of faith in the *real presence of* Christ in the sacrament of the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper.

Dr. Van Dyke correctly says:

"Dr. Schaff says truly that 'the Zwinglian is the simplest, clearest, and most intelligible theory. It removes the super-

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. v., pp. 1 *seq.*, and vol. vi., pp. 29 *seq.*

† "Fatherhood of God," 2d edition, Edin. 1867, p. 319.

natural influence of the ordinance, and presents no obstacle to the understanding.' And this is, doubtless, the secret of its prevalence. Rationalism, in the evil sense of the word, is by no means confined to Germany; nor does it win its only triumphs in the fields of Theology and Biblical Criticism. Many who denounce rationalizing in these directions, pursue the same method to extremes in their views of the Church and the Sacraments. They demand that the potency and the promise of these holy ordinances shall be brought down to their comprehension, and insist that the theory which takes them out of the category of divine mysteries is the true one, because it is so easily understood. That these views are current to a great extent, even in the Presbyterian Church, there is unfortunately little room for doubting. Their prevalence is both evidenced and fostered by the ecclesiastical phraseology so generally adopted. The first participation in the Lord's Supper has become not only contemporaneous, but, in the popular understanding, *identical* with professing Christ's name and joining the Church. And hence, in the apprehension of many, our participation in the Lord's Supper is chiefly, if not exclusively, a 'badge of our profession,' and its repeated use is but 'the renewal of our covenant vows.' " *

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper was in some respects the most debated of all doctrines, for it not only divided Protestants and Romanists, but it also divided the Lutheran from the Reformed; and there were differences among the Lutherans and among the Reformed themselves. Hence every phase of the doctrine was discussed, and the lines were drawn with the utmost care, so as to indicate the parts of the doctrine in which there was concord, and those parts in which there was discord. It is a mark of the rationalizing on this subject in the modern Church that there is such a wide-spread departure from the common doctrine of the Church and those parts of the doctrine in which all were agreed in the 17th century.

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. v., p. 8.

Bishop Davenant tells us:

"No protestant church can be named which professeth not with the Eucharist the true presence of the body and blood of Christ, although it acknowledgeth the very manner of the presence to be supernatural and plainly divine. . . . . All Protestant Churches are point blank against all erroneous doctrines of the bare representation of the body and blood of Christ, parted from the true exhibiting of him." *

It is in keeping with this lack of apprehension of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament that there should be loose and careless ways of observance. The Westminster divines were even ready to break with Parliament and risk everything for the principle of keeping unworthy persons from the Lord's table; but in our times not a few ministers give a general invitation to all who desire to partake, without any attempt to guard the Lord's table from the profane, the ignorant, and the scandalous. If there were any apprehension of the mystery and the sanctity of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, the ministry and people would be more careful in preparing themselves and in inviting others. The Master has never given His ministers the authority to make indiscriminate invitations. The Presbyterian Directory for Worship tells the minister whom he is to invite and also those whom he is to warn away.

Another sin against the sacrament has become common in recent times owing to the movement in favor of total abstinence. The Master Himself made bread and wine the sacramental elements. The early Protestants contended fiercely against the Romanists for withholding the wine from the laity, but many modern Protestants do not hesitate to banish the wine of redemption from the communion table, on the plea that it excites to

* "Exhortation to Brotherly Communion," 1641, p. 129.

intemperance. It would be lawful, for a man who could be tempted to intemperance at the Lord's table, to abstain from the cup. But it is not lawful to deprive all others of the cup of blessing on his account. And it is contrary to the Scriptures and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, it is a reflection upon the wisdom and grace of our Lord, and it is altogether disorderly to substitute any drink whatever for the wine, which our divine Saviour Himself invites us to drink at His table as the pledge of His redeeming love.

It is refreshing to turn away from the low and mean views of the Lord's Supper that prevail among recent Protestants to the noble words of Dr. A. A. Hodge:

"It does not do to say that this presence is only spiritual, because that phrase is ambiguous. If it means that the presence of Christ is not something objective to us, but simply a mental apprehension or idea of him subjectively present to our consciousness, then the phrase is false. Christ as an objective fact is as really present and active in the sacrament as are the bread and wine or the minister or our fellow-communicants by our side. If it means that Christ is present only as he is represented by the Holy Ghost, it is not wholly true, because Christ is one Person and the Holy Ghost another, and it is Christ who is personally present. The Holy Ghost doubtless is coactive in that presence and in all Christ's mediatorial work, but this leads into depths beyond our possible understanding. It does not do to say that the divinity of Christ is present while his humanity is absent, because it is the entire indivisible divine-human Person of Christ which is present."*

We have seen that the Presbyterian Church has departed from the nine chapters of the Confession, considered in the present chapter, into serious errors. In the whole realm of doctrine and practice, contra-confessional views, that strike at essential and necessary articles and

* "Popular Lectures," pp. 408–9.

destroy the Westminster system, are either entertained by large numbers of our ministry and people, or else are allowed to remain unchallenged by the orthodox, and are tolerated as if they were errors of small importance. Such a state of affairs could not have existed in the 16th and 17th centuries. Differences of far less importance resulted in strife, separation, and the organization of the existing denominations. In fact the strife in former generations was chiefly here. If the doctrines of the Church and the sacraments are of so little importance, and such differences as those mentioned can be rightly overlooked in the Presbyterian Church, why should we any longer perpetuate those different denominations that were established for the express purpose of giving liberty and advocacy to these different theories of the Church and the sacraments?

CHAPTER VIII.

Perplexities.

The Confession of Faith concludes with two chapters upon Eschatology, embracing the state of man after death, the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment. Here is one of the chief battle-grounds in the theology of the day. It is interesting, and at the same time distressing, to observe that all the faults of Traditionalism converge at this point. Here we find extra-confessional errors, infra-confessional errors, and contra-confessional errors; and the entire Church is in a condition of great perplexity.

JUDGMENT AT DEATH.

The chief extra-confessional error is the doctrine of a private judgment at death. This doctrine is taught by the majority of the dogmatic divines and the ministry who depend upon them. And yet there is not a word of it in the Westminster Confession or Catechisms, or in any Creed of the Church, or in any of the writings of the Word of God. It originated from the ethnic religions that know of no ultimate judgment and no primitive judgment in Eden. These religions needed the judgment at death to determine the rewards and punishments incurred by men in this life. The doctrine was retained in a semi-Pelagian Church, which had no proper conception of the guilt of original sin, and which made much of the debit and credit account of human actions.

It was revived by Protestant dogmatic divines in the interest of determining the fate of men immediately after death, without regard to the doctrine of the middle state.

This doctrine of a private judgment at death works mischief in several directions:

(*a*). It cramps the doctrine of the primitive judgment of our race in Eden, robs that divine act of its meaning, and imperils the doctrine of original sin. The Larger Catechism teaches that

> "the fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come." *

According to this statement the race of man is a condemned race. By an act of divine judgment all men are born into this world in a state of punishment culminating in death, which then introduces them to another state of punishment in the world to come. There is no room here for a judgment at death, a pretended judgment that grants no new trial, and that makes no change whatever in the original sentence.

(*b*). All men remain in the state of condemnation and punishment until they are removed from it by divine grace and translated into a state of redemption. They are justified freely by divine grace so soon as they believe in Christ and they are no longer under condemnation.

What can a private judgment at death do for a man who is already justified? Is he to be justified over again? Is he to have a higher grade of justification? He, of whom Christ said, "He cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life," † has noth-

* Q. 27. † John v. 24.

ing to gain or to lose by such a judgment. A justified man ought to have no fear of death. If it introduces him into the presence of his loving Father and Redeemer, he will look forward to it with joy. This false doctrine, that he must at once after death appear before the supreme tribunal and stand the test of a judgment upon which his everlasting future will depend, makes the bravest and the holiest shrink from death.

(*c*). There is no place in the order of salvation for a private judgment at death. There can be none for the sinner or saint in accordance with the Calvinistic scheme. An Arminian may look forward to a judgment at death, because he underrates the guilt of original sin and makes man's salvation dependent upon his use of his probation in this world. The private judgment at death decides the issues of this probation. Man's salvation is uncertain until this judgment has been pronounced. The doctrine that this life is a probation and that there is a private judgment at death are inseparable. Both are Arminian, and neither can be reconciled with Calvinistic principles.

(*d*). The doctrine of a private judgment at death obtrudes itself in place of the public judgment of the day of doom, renders it unnecessary, and strips it of its importance. Dr. Shedd says:

> "The private judgment at death and the public judgment at the last day coincide, because in the intermediate state there is no alteration of moral character, and consequently no alteration of the sentence passed at death."*

The Scriptures and the creeds agree in holding up the public judgment as the crisis that determines the everlasting destiny of mankind. If our eternal weal

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* Shedd, "Dogmatic Theology," vol. ii., p. 660. Chas. Scribner's Sons.

or woe is to be determined by a private judgment at death the ultimate public judgment is reduced to a mere ceremony, confirming in public the judgment that had been privately given to the sinner centuries and possibly millenniums before.

"Not only would nothing of essential importance remain for the judgment, if every one entered the place of his eternal destiny directly after death; but in that case, also, no room would be left for a progress of believers, who, however, are not yet sinless at the moment of death. If they are conceived as holy directly after death, sanctification would be effected by the separation from the body; the seat, therefore, of evil must be found in the body, and sanctification would be realized through a mere suffering, namely, of death in a physical process, instead of through the will. Moreover, the absoluteness of Christianity demands that no one be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought near to him. But that is not the case in this life with millions of human beings. Nay, even within the church there are periods and circles where the Gospel does not really approach men as that which it is. Moreover, those dying in childhood have not been able to decide personally for Christianity."*

The public judgment is at the completion of the era of grace. It presupposes the accomplishment of the entire order of redemption for all the elect. It is a judgment pronounced by the Redeemer on the basis of His work of redemption, and in view of its completion. It is the culmination of the Messianic kingdom; the triumph of the Lamb in His saints and over every foe. The private judgment at death would be premature. It would be in the midst of the process of redemption for the individual and for the world. It would presuppose all the processes of grace until the day of judgment. It would assign the rewards and penalties centuries before they were earned. Indeed this doctrine of a private

* "Dorner on the Future State," pp. 100–1. Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1883.

judgment at death is impossible to any one who believes that there will be growth in grace or in sin in the middle state. It is connected with narrow views of the work of the Redeemer and His work of redemption. It is associated with an undue emphasis upon the imputed righteousness of Christ and a neglect of the doctrine of the transformation of the Christian into the likeness of Christ by the impartation of His righteousness. The Confession and the Scriptures teach that the judgment after death will be a judgment according to works and character. Men are justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ when they accept Him as their Saviour. In the day of judgment they will be justified by the righteousness of Christ that has been imparted to them, that has transformed them and that has made them righteous as Christ their Redeemer is righteous. Dr. A. A. Hodge gives expression to a common error when he says:

"All mankind will then be judged by Christ in person, and believers justified on the ground of imputed righteousness and unbelievers condemned for their own sins." *

Such an ultimate justification does not advance beyond the justification of believers at the moment they believe. It ignores the whole process of sanctification; it takes no account of the infusion of the righteousness of Christ and of His transforming grace in sanctification. It gives me great pleasure to endorse the excellent remarks of the premillenarian, Dr. Brookes, here, with regard to sanctification at death:

"Post-millennialists invariably † make it" (sanctification) "end

* "Presbyterian Doctrine," p. 31.

† This is not true, for there are not a few Post-millennialists who agree with Dr. Brookes here.

at death, and thus turn our attention to that which is the curse, the consequence and the conquest of sin, to the clammy sweat, the glazing eye, the labored breathing, the coffin, the grave, the worm and corruption, as the goal to which the Holy Spirit's discipline and teachings conduct the believer. It is needless to say that no such view is presented in Scripture. There, a far higher and nobler object is set before us: 'To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints' (1 Thess. iii. 13); 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. v. 23); 'And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming' (1 John ii. 28). This, and not death, is the appropriate and glorious termination of our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

The righteousness of Christ is imputed in order that it may be imparted to the entire body of His redeemed. When the judgment sounds, the mediatorial kingdom of glory will shine forth. Then we may be assured that the Redeemer will rejoice in a completed work. His elect will not merely be justified and clothed with imputed righteousness; they will be sanctified and adorned with a righteousness of their own, complete and perfect, reflecting the righteousness and glory of their Lord; for His bride will be a glorious church, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"; "holy and without blemish."

THE MILLENNIUM.

The current doctrine of a millennium in the future before the advent of Christ is another extra-confessional doctrine for which there is no basis in the Westminster Standards. The Westminster divines as a body held to

* "Premillennial Essays," p. 304. Chicago: Revell, publisher, 1879.

the ancient orthodox view of the Christian Church, that the millennium corresponds in whole or in part with the age of the Christian Church as the kingdom of the Messiah on earth. There was great difference of opinion with regard to the beginning of the millennium, whether at the first advent of Christ, at His resurrection, on the day of Pentecost, at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the conversion of the Roman empire. There was difference of opinion as to its duration, whether the thousand years were exactly a thousand years or a symbolical number for an extended period. Accordingly some thought the millennium was past, others that it still continued. There can be no doubt that these views prevailed in the Westminster Assembly and gave shape to its definitions. Hence there is no mention of the millennium. There is no room for it in the chapters on Eschatology. The Standards express the faith of the universal catholic Church in looking forward to the advent of Christ for the judgment of the risen world as imminent. It is true that a considerable number of the Westminster divines looked forward to a more glorious condition of the Church on earth prior to the advent of Jesus Christ, but only a few of these identified those times with the millennium. The current doctrine is one for which Daniel Whitby, the Arminian, and the great revival of Methodism are chiefly responsible.

All those who hoped for the golden age of the Church in the future were called Chiliasts or Millenaries. The Anabaptists of the Reformation were Premillenarians. All the Reformers except Francis Lambert agreed with the Roman Catholic Church that the millennium was either past or still present. Francis Lambert, however,*

* "Commentary in Apoc.," Marburg, 1528, p. 283.

while he rejected Premillenarianism as an "execrable error," held that Jesus Christ will reign over the whole world in a spiritual manner, all sects will be annihilated, Antichrist will be destroyed, Israel will be converted, and there will be one holy Christian Church in the world. This view was adopted by many subsequent Protestant divines on the Continent and in Great Britain, some connecting it with the millennium and some holding it apart from the millennium. The most influential of these were Gallus of Leiden,* who made the millennium the period between 1519 and the advent of Christ to judgment at the end of the world; Piscator of Herborn,† who taught that the martyrs would rise to reign with Christ in heaven, while upon earth the Church would enjoy felicity and security during the millennium, after the fall of Antichrist; Alsted,‡ who taught a bodily resurrection of the martyrs to live in this world during the millennium, but held that Christ will reign visibly in heaven but invisibly on earth, His visible kingdom being resigned to the risen martyrs. Thomas Brightman first introduced these views into Great Britain in his "Commentary on the Apocalypse."§ He makes two millenniums, the first from Constantine till 1300, when he finds the resurrection of the martyrs in Wiclif and his associates, and then a second millennium from 1300 to 2300. This is followed by the conversion of the Jews and the glorious condition of the combined Jewish and Gentile Churches on earth described in Rev. xxi. and xxii. In 1621, Henry Finch wrote a book entitled "The Calling of the Jews," which was published for him by William

* "Clavis Prophetica," Leiden, 1592, p. 26.

† "Comment. on New Test., 1597, on Rev. xx."

‡ "Beloved City," p. 17, London, 1643.

§ Frankfurt, 1609; Heidelberg, 1612; Amsterdam, 1615; Leiden, 1616.

Gouge. He follows Brightman, referring Rev. xxi. and xxii. to the restored Jewish Church. This doctrine of the conversion of the Jews and of a more glorious condition of the Church in connection therewith, seems to have laid strong hold upon many of the Westminster divines. William Gouge, one of the leaders of the Assembly, especially in the work on the Confession, certainly held this opinion and carefully distinguishes it from Premillenarianism, as is clear from the following extract:

"There are more particular promises concerning a future glory of the Christian Church, set down by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his disciples in the New, especially in the book of the Revelation, then we have either heard of or seen in our dayes to be accomplished. The glorious city described. Rev. xxi. 10, etc., is by many judicious divines taken for a type of a spiritual, glorious estate of the Church of Christ under the gospel yet to come, and that before his last coming to judgment. I passe by all conceits of our later Chiliasts or Millenaries (whom in English we may call thousandaries) who imagine that Christ shall personally come down from heaven, in that nature in which after his resurrection he ascended into heaven, and reign here a thousand years with his saints. The certainty of this I leave to be proved by them who are the broaches thereof. But this is most certain, that there are yet better things to come than have been since the first calling of the gentiles. Among other better things to come, the recalling of the Jews is most clearly and plentifully foretold by the prophets."*

Stephen Marshall, the great preacher,† Herbert Palmer,‡ the chairman of the Committee on the Catechism, and Antony Tuckney, his successor, with many others,

* "Sermon before the house of Peers,—'The progresse of divine Providence,'" p. 29, 24 Sept., 1645.

† "Common's Sermon," June 15, 1643. "Lord's Sermon," Oct. 28, 1646, p. 13.

‡ "Common's Sermon," June 28, 1643, p. 64.

held this opinion without attaching it to the millennium. Marshall calls it "the glorious times which Christ hath promised and the Church long looked for." Palmer calls it "a most glorious and blessed Reformation," and Tuckney carefully distinguishes it from Premillenarianism.* He maintains that we are not to expect a personal reign of Christ on earth:

"We according to the Scriptures rejoice in the first advent, in the Incarnation, the second we expect in the last day, but a third intermediate one we do not acknowledge. Hebrews ix. 26–28 we read that Christ appeared once to do away with sin and that he is to appear again without sin; but a third neither there nor anywhere do we read. We read indeed of that illustrious phanerosis, epiphaneia, parousia, apokalupsis of our Lord, but everywhere of that as it were unique event when heaven and earth will be dissolved, II. Peter iii. 10. There will be an end of all things, I. Cor. xv. 24, which by their opinion are not to be until after the millennium; when all shall be judged, Matth. xxv. 31, II. Tim. iv; all the saints shall be gathered to Christ, II. Thess. ii. 1; be ever with him, I. Thess. iv. 17, John xiv. 3; and enjoy the beatific vision of God, I. John iii. 2; which accord with the last day and not with their millennium."

After thus opposing the Premillennial advent, he asserts as strongly as Gouge, Marshall, and Palmer the hope of the more glorious age of the Church:

"That Antichrist, that is to say, the Roman is to be destroyed, I no-wise doubt. That there will be an illustrious conversion of the Jews, if not of all, at least of a great many and far more than ever has been, I firmly believe. Until this most splendid dawn shall shine forth, that a gloomy night is to overshadow the church, soon to come, I fear, and immediately before the rising of the sun, most dark, I greatly fear. But that sun having at length arisen, I seem to myself to see a most splendid day to come, abounding to the utmost with joy and at the same time external

* "Prælectiones Theologicæ," Amst., 1679, pp. 185, 242.

peace. This the Apocalypse seems to me darkly though with sufficient evidence to reveal."

These extracts explain Robert Baylie's statement in his letter to William Spang, September 5, 1645, that "The most of the chief divines here, not only Independents, but others, such as Twisse, Marshall, and Palmer, and many more, are express Chiliasts." They were Chiliasts in the generic sense, embracing all those who looked forward to the golden age of the Church; but Gouge, Marshall, Palmer, Tuckney, and other chief divines were not Premillenarians. Baylie here classes Twisse with Marshall and Palmer, just as elsewhere * he classes together as Chiliasts, Piscator, Alsted, Mede, Archer, Thomas Goodwin, and Burroughs, and then separating the three last named, charges them with "setting up the whole fabric of Chiliasm."

These extracts also explain the exposition of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer in the Larger Catechism for which Antony Tuckney was chiefly responsible. "We pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in"; all which expresses the hope of these divines in a more glorious condition of the Church, and this without any idea of a millennium, and entirely consistent with the prayer "that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and 'our reigning with him forever.'" †

It is clear, then, that the Westminster divines left the future millennium altogether out of the Standards, and that there is no room for it in their definitions. Those

* "Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time," London, 1645, cap. xi.

† Question 191.

who hold to this opinion entertain an extra-confessional doctrine. I entirely agree with these Westminster divines. Gouge, Marshall, Palmer, and Tuckney express my views exactly. They give just that improvement in the ancient church doctrine that was needed. They stop just where they ought to stop. But when recent Presbyterian divines go further, and adopt the scheme of the Arminian, Whitby, they take a position which suits quite well with evangelical Methodism, but which is not in accord with Calvinism. They moreover go against the Scriptures, which do not recognize any such future millennium as this theory professes.

The doctrine of a future millennium is not so innocent as it appears to be on the surface. It changes the faith of the Church in the imminency of the second advent of Christ. It makes the millennium the great hope of the future instead of the presence of the Redeemer Himself. The Messiah is the great hope of the Church, the supreme object of our longing and striving, the bridegroom for whose presence the affianced bride prays and agonizes. But the current theology pushes the Messiah behind the millennium, and fixes the hope of men upon an illusion and a delusion of human conceit and folly.

THE MIDDLE STATE.

Among infra-confessional errors the most serious is the neglect of the doctrine of the Middle State. The Confession of Faith and the Catechisms are meagre enough here. The Westminster divines were themselves in the drift of antagonism to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. They did not distinguish between the doctrine of the middle state in the ancient Catholic Church and the perversion of it in the Roman Catholic doctrine. They threw away purgatory without substituting

anything in its place. They distinguish the middle state between death and the resurrection, but they practically made no other distinction than the absence of the body in the former and its presence in the latter. They even go so far as to use the terms Heaven and Hell indiscriminately for both states. The Westminster doctrine of the middle state finds fullest expression in the Larger Catechism. Three states after death are distinguished. "The communion in glory, which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment." *

The state immediately after death is thus defined:

"The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory; waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness; and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day." †

This statement ascribes to the redeemed holiness and blessedness in heaven with God and Christ, and to the unredeemed a wretched abode in the prison of hell until the judgment, both classes in a disembodied condition. What is affirmed in these statements is affirmed of the state immediately after death and not of the moment of time immediately after death. The Confession does not affirm that all these blessings are enjoyed by the righteous immediately when they die, but in the

* Q. 82. † Q. 86.

state immediately after death. It does not affirm that there is no change in the condition of the righteous in heaven, or of the imprisoned souls in hell during the middle state. The statements apply to the whole period of the middle state and not to the moment of time that begins it. The Confession teaches that all the blessedness and misery of the middle state are preparatory to the judgment which first assigns all mankind to their ultimate conditions. Those who recognize no change of condition in the middle state virtually make it a blank and little better than sleep, unconsciousness, or death. The Confession teaches that the state is a state of intense activity in the presence of God on the part of the righteous, involving growth in holiness and blessedness. It teaches confinement of the wicked in prisons in torment, involving the experience of suffering and anguish. If these sufferings are not remedial they must be detrimental and involve increase of sin, guilt, and torment.

Dr. A. A. Hodge deserves great credit for his efforts to regain ground in the doctrine of the middle state. I agree with him in his denunciation of those who would mutilate the Apostles' Creed by striking out the clause "He descended into Hell." I assent to his statement that

> "This creed as it stands is a part of the binding standards of our Church, to which every minister and elder solemnly subscribes, and it is, after the Scriptures, the most ancient, venerable and generally recognized of all the historic literary monuments of the Christian Church. It seems to me a dreadful violation of the bonds which connect us with the history of Christian faith and life, and of the common ties which still connect the divided segments of 'the body of Christ' for any one branch of that Church to agitate for the mutilation of the venerable creed which belongs to the whole brotherhood and to all the sacred past as well." *

* "Popular Lectures," p. 431.

I very much regret that my beloved colleague, Dr. Shedd, is guilty of this error. His reference to the clause of the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into Hell," as "the spurious clause"; and his statement that "it required the development of the doctrine of purgatory, and of the mediæval eschatology generally, in order to get it formally into the doctrinal system of both the Eastern and Western churches," * are both of them unhistorical. There are few doctrines that can claim such common patristic consent as this doctrine, and it is at the basis of ancient and mediæval eschatology and not a later development out of it.

Those who endeavor to commit this sin against the historic Church do it in the interest of an attempt to get rid of the doctrine of the middle state, which is based upon the descent of Jesus into the abode of the dead.

Dr. Hodge is also worthy of all praise for his statement that

"there is something incomparably higher and more complete to look forward to—when all the redeemed shall pass forever from under the power of death, and each entire person, instinct with life and glorified, shall be completely conformed to the likeness of his Lord and adjusted to his environment in the new heavens and the new earth." †

But Dr. Hodge is incautious when he says that

"the intermediate state is a condition of death. The spirits of men, while their bodies remain in their graves, are ghosts or disembodied souls. The condition of even the redeemed dead, although completely delivered from sin and at home with the Lord, is one in which they are not yet completely delivered from all the consequences of sin." ‡

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* "Dogmatic Theology," pp. 603, 607. † "Popular Lectures," p. 426.

‡ Pages 424–5.

Dr. Hodge recognizes the difference between the middle and the ultimate states, but he does not apprehend the importance of the middle state as a period of intermediate development and preparation for the final state. This is due to his doctrine of immediate sanctification at death,* which is not designed by the Westminster divines when they say that in the state immediately after death we are made perfect in holiness. They had no design of contradicting their doctrine of progressive sanctification. If Dr. Hodge had retained the doctrine of progressive sanctification and had recognized that it went on during the middle state he would never have recognized the middle state as a condition of death. The middle state is the great state of sanctification for believers and of degradation for unbelievers.

"As for the pious, intercourse with the ungodly, to which they were subject on earth, ceases after death; they suffer nothing more from them, not even temptation. The connection of believers with Christ is so intimate that death and Hades have no power over it. On the contrary death brings them an increase of freedom from temptations and disturbances, as well as of blessedness. For believers there is no more punishment, but there is growth, a further laying aside of defects, an invigoration through the greater nearness of the Lord which they may experience, and through the more lively hope of their consummation." . . . . "In this life the realities of the sensuous world are the objects of sight, the spiritual world is the object of faith. Then, when the physical side is wanting to the spirit, these poles will be reversed. To the departed spirits the spiritual world whether in good or evil, will appear to be the real existence resting on immediate evidence. Since, then, such internal soul-life unveils the ground of the soul more openly, the retiring into self has for believers the effect of purifying and educating. It serves to obliterate all stains, to harmonize the

* See p. 147.

whole inner being, in keeping with the good disposition brought over from the other life or later acquired; thus there will be for them no idle waiting for the judgment but a progressing in knowledge, blessedness, and holiness, in communion with Christ and the heavenly company."

"But in regard to those who died unbelieving, or not yet believing, to them also the ground of their souls is laid bare; hence also their impurity, their discord, and alienation from God, is unveiled." . . . . "If, instead of repenting and being converted, instead of growing in self-knowledge and knowledge of God as holy, and yet gracious in Christ, they prefer to continue in evil; then the form of their sin becomes more spiritual, more demoniacal, in accordance with their state from which this world recedes farther and farther, and thus it ripens for the judgment."*

Lest any one should stumble at these excellent thoughts owing to the name of Dorner, I shall conclude with the wise words of John Wesley:

"I cannot therefore but think that all those who are with the rich man in the unhappy division of hades will remain there, howling and blaspheming, cursing and looking upwards, till they are cast into 'the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' And on the other hand, can we reasonably doubt but that those who are now in paradise in Abraham's bosom, all those holy souls who have been discharged from the body from the beginning of the world unto this day, will be continually ripening for heaven, will be perpetually holier and happier, till they are received into the 'kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.'"†

PREMILLENARIANISM.

There are several contra-confessional errors now prevalent in the Presbyterian Church in the department of Eschatology. A group of these is associated with the term Premillenarianism. These errors are:

* Dorner, "Future State," pp. 106–8.

† "Works," cxxvi., sermon "On Faith."

(1). There is a resurrection of the bodies of the saints at the beginning of the millennium, but the resurrection of the wicked is postponed until after the millennium. This is against the Larger Catechism, which teaches "that the bodies of believers rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls." * "We are to believe that at the last day, there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." †

(2). The second advent of Jesus Christ introduces the millennium, and there is to be a third advent at the day of judgment. This is against the Larger Catechism, which teaches that

"Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness." ‡

(3). There are two judgments: one at the beginning of the millennium, and another after the last conflict that follows the millennium. This is against the Confession, which teaches that

"God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." §

Thus Premillenarianism presents an entirely different scheme and order of events in the doctrine of Last

* Q. 86. † Q. 87. ‡ Q. 56. § Chap. xxxiii.

Things from that taught in the Westminster Standards, teaching two future advents, two resurrections, and two judgments, and fixing the attention of men upon the first advent to establish the millennium, instead of the advent at the last day to determine the everlasting future of all men and of angels. The Premillenarians endeavor to establish their right to hold their opinions in the Presbyterian Church by laying stress upon the Westminster doctrine of the imminency of the advent, which those who hold the current views of the millennium cannot do. The alternative is not between these two doctrines. They forget the orthodox doctrine of the millennium, which was held by the Westminster divines in common with the Reformers and the ancient and mediæval Church. They also seek to find Premillenarians among the Westminster divines on the basis of Baylie's statement that the chief English divines were Chiliasts. This we have already explained by showing that Baylie used Chiliast as a generic term, and he did not mean thereby Premillenarian.* There were several Premillenarians in the Westminster Assembly. The chief of these were Thomas Goodwin and Jer. Burroughs, the Independents. Twisse, the first prolocutor, also seems to have inclined to a moderate Premillenarianism, but he had not committed himself to it in any public manner. Besides these, Francis Woodcock is the only one who was certainly a Premillenarian. Twisse and Burroughs died before the doctrinal standards were composed. Goodwin was influential among the outside Independents, but he was out of harmony with the Westminster divines in many questions of Church government and doctrine, and had little influence in the

* See p. 205.

composition of the Westminster Standards. On the other hand, Premillenarianism was strongly urged by a number of able writers of the time, and the Westminster divines were compelled to take issue with them. The chief of these were John Archer,* a former associate of Goodwin at Arnheim; Robert Manton,† Nathaniel Homes,‡ and William Aspinwall.§

The Confession of Faith of the seven Baptist Churches issued in 1645–6, gave expression to Premillenarianism, and it became the special doctrine of the English Baptists and the Fifth-monarchy men. Thomas Bakewell,‖ Alexander Petrie,¶ Robert Baylie,** Ephraim Paget,†† Thomas Edwards,‡‡ Edward Featley,§§ Alex. Ross,‖‖ and others sharply attacked Premillenarianism as heresy. I shall give a few specimens of renunciation of this error by the Westminster divines.

Henry Wilkinson says: "Christ shall reign (though I cannot understand personally on earth, yet) I believe eternally in the heavens." ° Rutherford says: "I mean not any such visible reign of Christ on earth as the millenaries fancy." °° Joseph Caryl says: "I assert not his

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* "Personal Reign of Christ on Earth," 1642; "Zion's Joy in her King," 1643.

† "Israel's Redemption," 1642; "Israel's Redemption, redeemed," 1646.

‡ "Resurrection Revealed," 1653.

§ "Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy," 1653.

‖ "Saints' Inheritance," 1643; "Confutation of Divers Errors," 1646.

¶ "Chiliomastic," 1644.

** "Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time," 1645.

†† "Description of the Hereticks and Sectaries of these latter Times," 1645.

‡‡ "Gangraena," 1646. §§ "Dippers Dipt," 6th edition, 1651.

‖‖ "View of All Religions," xii. 9, 2d edition, 1655.

° "Two Treatises," p. 97.

°° "Common's Sermon," Jan. 31, '43, p. 56.

opinion about the personal reign of Christ." And Geo. Gillespie says:

"That which I have said from grounds of Scripture concerning a more glorious, yea, a more peacable condition of the Church to be yet looked for, is acknowledged by some of our sound and learned writers who have had occasion to express their judgment about it and it hath no affinity with the opinion of an earthly or temporal kingdom of Christ, or of Jesus' building again of Jerusalem and the material temple, and then obtaining a dominion above all other nations and the like." *

We have already cited Gouge and Tuckney.† We might also cite Gower, Lightfoot, Gataker, Seaman, and others. And I challenge any one to produce an extract from any Presbyterian member of the Westminster Assembly save Twisse and Woodcock that will indicate even such a mild type of Premillenarianism as these two divines seem to have entertained. In the meanwhile we may refer to two official utterances that seem to determine the question. The Westminster divines in their Revision of the XXXIX Articles seem to have designed to rule out an advent of Christ to the earth prior to the ultimate judgment. We shall place in their midst the statement of the Irish Articles that influenced the Westminster divines more than any others:

THE XXXIX ART.	IRISH ARTICLES.	WESTMIN. REVISION.
And there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.	And there sitteth at the right hand of the Father until he return to judge all men at the last day.	And there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the general resurrection of the body at the last day.

* "Common's Sermon," March 27, '44.

† See pp. 203-204.

The general resurrection of the body at the last day excludes the prior resurrection of the saints at the beginning of a millennium. The remaining of Christ in heaven until the general resurrection excludes His advent to earth at the beginning of the millennium.

The Provincial Assembly of London, embracing all the Westminster divines having positions in London, as well as all the Presbyterian ministers of the city, in their official *jus divinum* signed by moderator and clerks, but composed chiefly by Edmund Calamy, and designed to be the official reply of the Presbyterian party to the questions of Parliament,* commits the whole Presbyterian body against the Premillenarian error:

"That there were many corruptions which crept into the church in the very infancy of it, and were generally received as Apostolic traditions, which yet notwithstanding are not pleaded for by our Episcopal men, but many of them confessedly acknowledged to be errors and mistakes, witness first, the millenary opinion which Justin Martyr saith, That he and all in all parts orthodox Christians held it."†

The Westminster Standards agree with the Scriptures in making the great crisis of the world, the second advent to judge the risen world; Premillenarians make it the second advent to introduce the millennium; some dogmatic divines make the crisis the private judgment at death.

The Confession closes with the watchword of Paul and John, and of the apostolic Church; yes, of all ages until the 18th century:

"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

The Premillenarians make that prayer in view of the advent to introduce the millennium, but the West-

* See pp. 176–177.

† "Jus Divinum," Appendix, p. 100.

minster divines made it with regard to the advent for judgment after the millennium. But it is evident that no one who believes that at least a thousand years must intervene between himself and the advent of Christ can make that prayer or have any real faith in the imminency of the advent. Large numbers of the Presbyterian ministry of our day cannot subscribe to this closing section of the Westminster Confession in its historic sense, and are really as contra-confessional at this point as the Premillenarians are at other points.

PROBATION AFTER DEATH.

In recent times the doctrine of a probation after death for those who have had no probation in this life, has sprung up in the Christian Church, chiefly with the unfolding of philosophical ethics, and has gained the adherence of not a few able divines in Great Britain and America. The doctrine of a probation after death depends upon the doctrine of a probation in this life. The doctrine that this life is a probation was not known to the Reformers or the Westminster divines. It is a doctrine that is inconsistent with Calvinistic principles. These represent that our race had a probation once for all in Adam at the beginning of human history and were condemned for failure in that probation, so that we are a lost race, not under probation, but under a curse and needing above all things redemption through Jesus Christ. The doctrine that this life is a probation was first introduced into modern theology by Daniel Whitby in 1710, in his attack on the Five Points of Calvinism. It was first made the common property of modern British and American theology by Bishop Butler in his "Analogy," which has been a universal text-book of Apologetics.

In this way it gradually took possession of even Calvinistic writers, and warped the theology of the most conservative divines.

Dr. E. D. Morris says that: "One of the radical vices in the theology of Dorner" "lies in his low and scant perception of this great ordinating doctrine" of the Moral Government of God. "The declension from the high position of Butler and his compeers on this doctrine, has been a most serious calamity to more recent English theology also."* But the New England doctrine of the Moral Government of God is only a democratic twist in the doctrine of divine sovereignty and is not regarded by European divines as an advance in theology. Dr. Morris admits that its doctrine of probation is a departure from the older Calvinism.† It is really a provincial and temporary freak in theology which has already been abandoned by thoughtful British divines and which will soon disappear from American theology. Dr. Morris cannot stand on this contra-confessional doctrine of a probation in this life and then deny its logical consequence, the extension of that probation into the middle state.

If this life be a probation, then there is no ground in the Scriptures or in the Westminster symbols or in sound reason, why this probation should not be extended into the middle state for those who have had no probation here. I have examined all the arguments adduced by Dr. Morris and others in support of their position, that probation stops with death, and find that these will not bear criticism. The Scriptures and the Confession alike have the underlying doctrine that this life is not a probation, and therefore there are no reasons presented

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* "Is there Salvation after Death?" p. 163. † *l. c.*, p. 172.

in them for bringing this probation to a halt at death. They teach that our race is a lost race and that the great problem is to redeem as many of them as possible. It may be that there is no hope of regeneration after death, or of the initiation of the order of salvation in the middle state, but this is a very different doctrine from the doctrine that human probation ends with death. Dr. Morris admits that those dying in infancy are exempt from probation,* but claims that "in some way or other, and to some extent or other, God is actually trying and testing every human being who has reached moral consciousness, as to the great alternatives of right or wrong, duty or pleasure, disobedience or disloyalty to Him"; † and even goes so far as to maintain what the Confession regards as "very pernicious and to be detested"‡ when he says: "The multitudes whom the great Swiss reformer anticipated seeing in the celestial life may, by the large grace of God bringing them to repentance and obedience during their earthly pilgrimage, possibly attain with us to that beatific home." § Dr. Prentiss well says:

"The probationary conception of this life, at all events, is wholly inapplicable to that large portion of the human race who die in infancy. They are confessedly incapable of a probation in any proper sense of that term. We cannot think of them as here passing through a moral trial, on the result of which depends their weal or woe in the next world. They do neither good or evil here, nor will they be rewarded or punished there. But a religious theory of this life, which fails to meet the case of so large a portion of the human race, must needs be, to say the least, a partial, inadequate theory." ‖

We must admit that the innumerable millions of

* *l. c.*, p. 196. † *l. c.*, p. 166. ‡ See p. 121. § *l. c.*, p. 190.
‖ *Presbyterian Review*, vol. iv., p. 569.

heathen who have passed into the middle state have had no real probation. They have had sufficient of the light of nature to condemn them as sinners. But the Westminster Confession teaches that they have no light of nature sufficient to save them, and they have had no offer of the grace of the Gospel.* Such a condition of affairs is no probation—they have had no opportunity whatever of salvation according to the Westminster scheme. And the probation "in some way or other, and to some extent or other," of Dr. Morris, is rather an indefinite sort of a thing to hang the everlasting destiny of any man upon.

If this life is a probation upon which our everlasting future depends, then in order to have a fair trial and an equitable judgment, it is necessary that all should have a true and a complete probation. The lesser stages of probation must lead up to the higher stages, until every opportunity has been rejected and the only unpardonable sin has been committed. The doctrine that this life is a probation, leads inevitably to the position that the middle state is a still larger field for probation, for the vast majority of our race who have had no probation here; in which we must conceive of a preaching of the Gospel, regeneration, faith, justification, and the entire order of salvation begun and carried on. Those who take the contra-confessional position that this life is a probation, have no ground of resistance to the doctrine of the continuance of that probation in the middle state, until all have had the opportunity either of accepting Christ as their Saviour or of committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. They cannot hold probation here without following the Andover

* See p. 120.

theory and holding probation there. Christian ethics will inevitably compel every probationist to become an out and out probationist for this world and for the next.

Calvinists must give up this contra-confessional doctrine altogether and recover their position on the Westminster doctrine of original sin and of redemption. The question we have to determine as Calvinists is whether the divine grace is limited in its operation to this world of ours, whether the divine act of regeneration may take place in the middle state or not, whether any part of the order of salvation is carried on there or not, and if any part, what part. We have already seen that the divine grace is not confined to this world, that sanctification by the divine grace must continue in the middle state.* But we see no reason why the divine grace may not regenerate all the elect before they leave this world. If the divine grace may be applied to the millions of infants dying in infancy, why not also to millions of adult heathen ?

These questions force themselves upon us in connection with our hopes for the salvation of infants and heathen, and they must be answered before there can be any comfort or stability in modern theology.

I agree with my colleague, Dr. Prentiss, in preferring to trust with Calvinism to the electing grace of God rather than to the modern notion of human probation.

" Universal infant salvation, then, does not and cannot stand alone ; it has a most important bearing upon the whole soteriological doctrine. It shows how inconceivably wide and deep is God's mercy in Jesus Christ. It shows that, speaking after the manner of men, He is doing all He can do for the actual redemption of the world ; nothing keeps any soul from the gracious

* See p. 210.

operation of His infinite love and pity but its own wilful choice of evil and refusal of the good. 'Nihil ardet in inferno nisi propria voluntas.' *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn away from his way and live.*" . . . . "A theodicy that shall meet the claims of Christian thought and satisfy the cravings of the Christian heart, or charm to silence its doubts and fears, must vindicate the ways of Providence toward the little children, as well as toward the full-grown men and women. Let us hope that as the kingdom of God comes nearer and nearer, and its heavenly light, whether shining through the ever-living Word, in the inspired Scriptures, or in believing souls, is more fully comprehended, such a theodicy may yet bless the world. Certainly, a great step toward it will have been taken when the doctrine, that the countless myriads of the race who die in infancy, instead of being annihilated or lost, are forever with the Lord, shall become the common faith of the Church, and, at the same time, all the theological consequences of the doctrine shall be recognized and assigned their rightful place in the system of Christian truth."*

It is evident that in the whole field of Eschatology there is great perplexity in the minds of the theologians and the ministry, as well as of the people. The middle state must be opened up in the discussions that are in progress. There must be the fullest liberty in this debate. Those who depart from the Confession in the direction of narrowness, limiting the grace of God, cannot in the name of orthodoxy condemn those who are more generous in their views of the operation of the divine grace in the middle state. Those who claim to be conservatives in their departures from the Confession have no right to censure those who recognize themselves as progressives. In some respects the conservatives are the greater sinners. All should heed the great apostle to the Gentiles in his words: "*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein*

* *Presbyterian Review*, vol. iv., pp. 578–580.

thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things."

We have tested the current orthodoxy by the Westminster Standards and have found that it is not in accord with the Westminster Confession, even as a system, for there are many differences from articles and sections that are essential to the system. What does it matter if there be adherence to the hard doctrines of Calvinism if there is discord with the chief characteristics of the Puritan Confession? Francis Turretine is not the standard of orthodoxy for Presbyterians; but the Westminster Symbols are the secondary standards and the Word of God the primary standard. The Presbyterian Church as a Church tolerates contra-confessional doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments and the Last Things in large numbers of its teachers and pastors. The characteristic doctrines of Puritanism, as contained in the middle section of the Confession, such as repentance, saving faith, assurance of grace, sanctification, and good works, have been neglected by our most eminent theologians and ministers. In the first eleven chapters there have been great contest, excessive definitions, and assertions of the claims of orthodoxy, but even here the breadth and depth of the Standards have not been apprehended. In the doctrine of the Scriptures and of justification by faith, the two great principles of Protestantism, not a few recognized leaders of the Presbyterian Church have departed from the Westminster doctrine so far as to undermine and hazard these most precious achievements of the Reformation.

The Westminster system has been virtually displaced by the teachings of the dogmatic divines. It is no longer practically the standard of the faith of the Pres-

byterian Church. The Catechisms are not taught in our churches, the Confession is not expounded in our theological seminaries. The Presbyterian Church is not orthodox, judged by its own Standards. It has neither the old orthodoxy nor the new orthodoxy. It is in perplexity. It is *drifting* toward an unknown and a mysterious future.

CHAPTER IX.

Barriers.

We have thus far considered the Westminster Symbols as the tests of orthodoxy and have seen that the traditional theology in the Presbyterian churches is not in harmony therewith. If we should take the Articles of the Church of England as a test we would find that the Episcopal churches are in a similar situation. We would find that the Methodist, the Baptist, the Lutheran, and indeed all denominations of Christians have departed from their standards and are in the drift of the 19th century.

And this is exactly what we ought to expect from the history of the Church in former ages. The Church of Jesus Christ cannot long remain stationary. Action and reaction, ebb and flow, advance and decline govern all nature and all history. Why should any one have the presumption to suppose that the 17th century was the goal of Christian history, or that the definitions then made are the final doctrines for all time? The very fact that the 17th century was a century of discord, of strife, of division in the churches, should teach us to look with some suspicion upon its work.

As a Presbyterian, I do not hesitate to say that Christian theology did not reach its perfection in the Westminster Assembly. The Westminster divines made no

claim to infallibility. They made an advance in Christian theology beyond any of their predecessors, but this ought to have encouraged their successors to advance still further the banner of Christian knowledge.

Christian doctrine advances through the centuries under the guidance of the divine Spirit until He has led the Church into all truth.

In some doctrines the Church has reached definite conclusions that will abide forever. The consensus of Christendom is a testimony of incalculable value. But there are many doctrines respecting which there is discord in the Church, and where there must be an advance in order that this discord may pass away and concord be attained. There are other doctrines to which the Church has given little attention and respecting which there have been no official determinations in any of the Creeds.

We have already considered at some length the established doctrines of the Church upon which we are to build, and have separated them from the errors of dogmaticians and popular prejudice. We reserve the doctrines that the Church has still to unfold until our next chapter. We propose in this chapter to consider the doctrines that divide the Churches and the barriers to Christian union.

DIVINE RIGHT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The first great barrier to Christian union is the theory of *submission to a central ecclesiastical authority claiming divine right of government.*

This is the great sin of the Roman Catholic Church, which makes the pope at Rome, when speaking *ex cathedra*, the centre of unity and seat of absolute authority to decide all questions of religion, doctrine, and

morals. The way to union according to this theory is to dissolve all other Christian churches. All Christians must receive confirmation from Roman Catholic bishops, and so enter the communion of the Roman Catholic Church, and then submit with unflinching allegiance to the authority of the pope and his bishops. Such a union requires, on the one side, the forfeiture of the right of private judgment and the violation of the liberty of conscience; and on the other side the severance of the union and communion of the believer with his enthroned Saviour, and the re-establishment of union and communion through the mediation of the priests, bishops, and pope. It makes the visible Church, in a single one of its historical forms, the only means of access to the invisible Church and the presence of the Lord of glory.

Richard Baxter well said:

"This cheating noise and name of *Unity* hath been the great divider of the Christian world. And under pretence of suppressing heresie and schism, and bringing a blessed peace and harmonie amongst all Christians, the churches have been set all together by the ears, condemning and unchurching one another, and millions have been murthered in the flames, inquisition, and other kinds of death, and those are martyrs with the one part, who are burnt as hereticks by the other; and more millions have been murdered by wars. And *hatred* and *confusion* is become the mark and temperament of those who have most loudly cried up *Unity* and *Concord*, *Order* and *Peace*." *

Protestant divines have always recognized that the Church of Rome was a true Church, one of the many branches of Christendom. They have ever recognized the validity of her baptism and her ordination. They unite with her in veneration of the noble army of mar-

* "Cure of Church Divisions," 1670, p. 276.

tyrs—pious monks, bishops, archbishops, and popes—that have adorned the history of the Western Church. These are our heritage as well as theirs. The Reformation broke the Western Church into several national Churches. The legitimate heirs of the ancient and mediæval Church are the national Churches of England, Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, no less than the Roman Catholic Church, which remained unreformed in the southern countries of Europe.

The papacy as a hierarchical despotism claiming infallibility and usurping the throne of Jesus Christ is the Antichrist of the Reformers. Whether it be the Antichrist of the Scriptures or not, it is the closest historical approximation to the Antichrist of prophecy that has yet appeared in the world. The papacy is antichristian, the great curse of the Christian Church. The papal system was one of the reasons for the separation of Greek and Roman Christianity into two antagonistic ecclesiastical organizations. It was the great barrier to the reformation of the Latin Church, and, when the Protestant Reformation came, the authority of the pope was given to the side of error and sin, and the reformers were persecuted unto death. As the supremacy of the pope severed Greek from Roman Christianity, so it made a rupture between the Christianity of the North of Europe and the Christianity of the South of Europe. In more recent times the same baneful influence forced the separation of the Jansenists and the Old Catholics. Thus this theory historically has proved to be the mother of discord in Christendom. It is the chief barrier to Christian union.

"Neither indeed is there any hope, that ever we shall see a generall peace, for matters of religion, settled in the Christian

world, as long as this supercilious Master shall bee suffered to keepe this rule in God's house: however much soever hee bee magnified by his owne disciples, and made the onely foundation upon which the unitie of the Catholick dependeth."*

Until this barrier has been broken down the union of Christendom is impossible. The destruction of popery is indispensable to the unity of the Church.

But the papacy is not the only form of ecclesiastical authority that has produced discord. On the continent of Europe, Protestant princes were set up as little popes to lord it over Christ's Church; and in England, kings and queens usurped ecclesiastical supremacy; and the ills of the seventeenth century, in the Thirty Years' War on the continent, and the civil wars of Great Britain, were largely owing to this cause.

The result of the conflict in Great Britain was the establishment of three rival theories of Church government, each claiming divine right—the Episcopal government in England and Ireland, the Presbyterian government in Scotland, and the Congregational government which was virtually established in New England. Each of these governments was alike intolerant and exclusive. Each of them alike rent the robe of Christ's Church. This should not surprise us, for any ecclesiastical government that usurps divine authority, is tyrannical and schismatic from the very nature of the case. It is in itself an usurpation of the crown rights of Jesus Christ.

A scientific study of the sacred Scriptures and the first Christian century has shown that none of these forms of government is of divine right; they all alike are of human origin, and have arisen from historic cir-

* Ussher's "Brief Declaration," p. 14.

cumstances and sincere efforts to adapt the teachings of Scripture to these circumstances. It is noteworthy that there is agreement with reference to a single officer —the pastor of the congregation. All Christian churches have pastors, and they cannot do their work without them. Here is the basis for union. It is agreed that he should be a man called of God to his work, and endowed with the gifts and graces that are needed for the exercise of his ministry. It is also agreed that he should be ordained either by the imposition of hands or some suitable ceremony. This presbyter-bishop of the New Testament is found in all ages of the Church and in all lands. Herein is the true historical succession of the ministry, in the unbroken chain of these ordained presbyters. Herein is the world-wide government which is carried on through them. This is the one form of Church government that bears the marks of catholicity, that is *semper ubique et ab omnibus.*

It matters little comparatively how the royal government of Jesus Christ and His power of the keys is communicated to them, whether directly from the divine Master or mediately through the ordination of a presbytery or of a bishop, an archbishop or a pope, so long as the Lord Jesus Christ, the one king and head of the Church, actually carries on His government through them. We apprehend that the long-suffering Saviour will not deprive His people of the benefits of His reign, even if their leaders should make some mistakes in the form of government. This point of agreement in Church government should be insisted upon by the churches, whatever they may think of the importance of the other officers in the Church. If all the churches of Christendom would recognize the validity of the ordination of the ministry of the other churches, one of the chief bar-

riers to the concord of Christendom would be removed. They might deem this ordination as irregular and even disorderly, as not conformed to their own doctrine of church government; they might contend vigorously for the superior excellence of their own orders; if they would concede this one point to their fellow-Christians and fellow-ministers, the validity of whose ministry is attested by the Holy Ghost and its fruitfulness in good works.

Apart from this single church officer there is no agreement whatever. The deacon in the prelatical churches is a young man in preparation for the priesthood in a lower order of ministry. In the Reformed churches he is a layman having charge of the poor and of financial affairs. Among the Congregational churches he is a representative of the people and an adviser of the pastor. The deacons of the New Testament have little resemblance with any of these modern deacons.

The Reformed churches have elders who are associated with the pastor in a congregational presbytery which has the government of the congregation. There are elders in the New Testament who constitute a presbytery, but the majority of the elders of the Reformed churches at the present time have little resemblance to them. There was considerable difference of opinion in the Westminster Assembly with regard to this office. Stephen Marshall said in the course of the debate: "If I conceived every one should be called to subscribe to it or exercise no ministry, I should be loath to give my vote." *

The Protestant churches of America have been obliged to introduce the lay element into their congregational

* MS. Minutes Westminster Assembly, ii., p. 248.

government and to give it representation in the higher ecclesiastical courts; and these laymen with their different names have very similar work to that of the Presbyterian elders. The name is less important than the thing. The Presbyterian system seems to us to be the nearest to the New Testament representation and the most efficient and best organized method of lay representation. It might be best to abandon the name *ruling* elder, which is of questionable origin and propriety, and use some other name that is not associated with historical contests.* We should be willing to do this if it would advance the cause of Christian union. It seems to us there would be little difficulty in adjusting the mode of government of the congregations so as to satisfy all reasonable demands.

The chief difficulties arise when we ascend to the Presbyteries, Conventions, Conferences, Associations, and the other general bodies, and ask the question as to their authority. All agree that their authority should be moral and spiritual, but it is in dispute whether it should be legal and imperative as of higher jurisdiction. It has been found necessary in American civil government to protect the liberties of the people in communities and towns, and also in the States, and to limit the jurisdiction of the superior bodies. This matter has been too much neglected in ecclesiastical government. This is the way to solve not a few of our ecclesiastical controversies. Authority should decrease in extension and increase in intension as we ascend. The congregation with its pastor have certain rights and liberties which should be regarded as sacred, upon which the higher ecclesiastical bodies ought not to encroach. The authority of the higher bodies should be limited, and

* See p. 36.

absolute authority denied. A constitution is a great blessing to any church, for it defines the obligations of the minister and the people, and guarantees them liberty in all else. So the presbytery should have certain rights of control over its own churches into which the synod should not intrude. The synod's power should suffer still greater limitation. The power of the General Assembly ought to be confined to very few matters, and those of general interest, such as the Constitution of the Church and its general work.

The Congregational churches, with whom the Baptists agree, stand over against the Presbyterian and Episcopal forms of government as represented by the several Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, and Methodist bodies, that hold to the Presbyterian form of government, and the Episcopal Church, which maintains the Episcopal form of government. As regards agreement between the three forms, every effort was put forth for union and concord in the seventeenth century. The long debates in the Westminster Assembly show this. The words of the leading divines on both sides bear witness to it.

Thomas Hill, the Presbyterian, says on the one side:

"There is no such difference, for aught I know, between the sober Independent and moderate Presbyterian, but if things were wisely managed, both might be reconciled; and by the happy union of them both together, the Church of England might be a glorious church, and that without persecuting, banishing, or any such thing, which some mouths are too full of. I confess it is most desirable that *confusion* (that many people fear by Independency) might be prevented; and it is likewise desirable that the *severity* that some others fear, by the rigour of Presbytery might be hindred; therefore let us labor for a prudent Love, and study to advance an happy accomodation." *

* "An olive branch of peace and accomodation. Lord Mayor's Sermon, 1645," printed 1648, p. 38.

So on the other side, Jeremiah Burroughs, the Congregationalist, says:

"Why should we not think it possible for us to go along close together in love and peace, though in some things our judgements and practices be apparently different one from another? I will give you who are scholars a sentence to write upon your study doores, as needfull an one in these times as any; it is this: *opinionum varietas, et opiniantium unitas non sunt* ἀσύστατα—Variety of opinions, and unity of those that hold them, may stand together. There hath been much ado to get us to agree; we laboured to get our opinions into one, but they will not come together. It may be in our endeavours for agreement we have begun at the wrong end. Let us try what we can do at the other end; it may be we shall have better success there. Let us labour to joyne our hearts to engage our affections one to another: if we cannot be of one mind that we may agree, let us agree that we may be of one mind." *

And so the Presbyterian ministers of the Provincial Assembly of London say:

"A fifth sort are our reverend brethren of *New* and *Old England* of the Congregational way, who hold our churches to be true churches, and our ministers true ministers, though they differ from us in some lesser things. We have been necessitated to fall upon some things, wherein they and we disagree, and have represented the reasons of our dissent. But yet we here profess that this disagreement shall not hinder us from any Christian accord with them in affection. That we can willingly write upon our study doors that motto which Mr. Jer Burroughes (who a little before his death did ambitiously endeavour after union amongst brethren, as some of us can testifie) persuades all scholars unto, *opinionum varietas, et opiniantium unitas non sunt* ἀσύστατα. And that we shall be willing to entertain any sincere motion (as we have also formerly declared in our printed vindication) that shall farther a happy accommodation between us.

"The last sort are the moderate, godly episcopal men, that hold ordination by Presbyters to be lawful and valid; that a

* "Irenicum to the Lovers of Truth and Peace," London, 1646, p. 255.

Bishop and a Presbyter are one and the same order of ministry, that are orthodox in doctrinal truths and yet hold that the government of the Church by a perpetual Moderatour is most agreeable to Scripture pattern. Though herein we differ from them, yet we are farre from thinking that this difference should hinder a happy union between them and us. Nay, we crave leave to profess to the world that it will never (as we humbly conceive) be well with *England* till there be an union endeavoured and effected between all those that are orthodox in doctrine though differing among themselves in some circumstances about Church government." *

Richard Baxter led in a great movement for union in the organization of the Worcester Association, in 1653. Similar organizations were made in other counties, such as Westmoreland, Cumberland, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Essex. As Baxter says:

"The main body of our Association were men that thought the Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents had each of them some good in which they excelled the other two parties, and each of them some mistakes; and that to select out of all three the best part, and leave the worst, was the most desirable (and ancient) form of government." †

So again in 1661–62, every effort was put forth for union between the Presbyterian and Episcopal parties. The Presbyterians were willing to accept the plan of Archbishop Ussher to reduce the Episcopate to the form of synodical government. They were willing to use the Book of Common Prayer with the exception of a very few passages and with the omission of a very few ceremonies. As Baxter said:

"Oh, how little would it have cost your churchmen in 1660 and 1661 to have prevented the calamitous and dangerous divisions of this land, and our common dangers thereby, and the

* "Jus Divinum," Preface.

† "Church Concord," Preface. London, 1691.

hurt that many hundred thousand souls have received by it! And how little would it cost them *yet to prevent the continuance* of it!"*

The union was prevented in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries partly by political considerations, but chiefly by the theory that there could be no unity except by a submission to one strict form of church government. And so the three forms that were evolved from the religious conflicts of Great Britain have maintained themselves, strengthened their position, and have become unconquerable. What reasonable man can for a moment suppose that Presbyterianism will lose its hold upon Scotland and the North of Ireland, and give way to Episcopacy or Congregationalism, or that it will make any serious encroachments upon England or New England? There is no probability that the Church of England will ever succeed in imposing prelatical Episcopacy upon all the people of England, or will gain the supremacy over the Congregationalism of New England. Congregationalism will never gain much ground from Presbyterianism in the Middle and Southern States of America. In the Western States the three forms are upon more equal terms. Now that conquest is out of the question, and the reunion of Christendom is impracticable by a strict adherence to any of these forms, it is manifest that there can be no union without mutual recognition, concession, and assimilation. Each form has certain advantages in it and also some disadvantages. That would be the most excellent form of government which would combine the good features and avoid the defects of all.

There has been assimilation in recent times, especially

* "Penitent Confession," 1691, Preface.

in America. The Congregational churches give more authority to their Associations than is known in England. The Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches give less authority to their supreme courts than is common in Great Britain. But the difference is still so great that consolidation is out of the question at present. But there is a possibility of union by Federation. It seems to me that there are no sufficient reasons why the Episcopal General Convention, the Congregational General Council, the Baptist General Council, the Methodist Episcopal General Conference, the Presbyterian General Assemblies, and the Reformed General Synods should not all alike send representatives to a General Council of the Church of Christ of America, such a Council having only moral and spiritual authority. It seems to me that there are possibilities of union and co-operation in the general work of the Christian Church in America and in heathen lands that are incalculable in the good that might be produced. There are grand possibilities in the removal of barriers, stumbling-blocks, causes of friction and strife, and in the furtherance of peace, concord, and Christian love.

But what shall we do with the historical episcopate? We answer that the historical episcopate is an ambiguous term. There are many kinds of episcopates in Christian history. Some bishops claim the authority to rule the Church by divine right, some bishops derive their authority from archbishops, and some bishops receive their authority from the Pope. There are also bishops who are superintendents chosen by presbyters, and who have no other authority than that imparted to them by those who have chosen them. There are also presbyterial bishops who exercise all the rights and fulfil all the duties of the Christian ministry. The great

difference of opinion that prevails in the Church of Christ on the subject of the historical episcopate is in the matter of order and real seat of authority. Christendom might unite with an ascending series of superintending bishops that would culminate in a universal bishop, provided the pyramid would be willing to rest firmly on its base, the solid order of the presbyter-bishops of the New Testament and of all history and all churches. But the pyramid will never stand on its apex nor hang suspended in the air supported by any of its upper stages.

We confess to a warm sympathy with those members of the Protestant Episcopal Church who desire to remove the terms Protestant Episcopal from the name of their Church, on the ground that these terms are schismatical. All such terms are from the very nature of the case schismatical. They represent that the churches that bear them are parties or branches of the Church, and not the true and pure Church of Christ.

But the names really correspond with the facts; they express the truth. The evil of schism is in the churches. It will not cure the evil to abolish the names. When the evil of schism has been cured, then the schism and the names will disappear likewise. In the meanwhile it is far better that the names should remain and express the true state of the case to all earnest souls. They may perhaps sting the conscience and goad the will to earnest action in behalf of peace and unity.

"Why, sirs, have not Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopall, etc., one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Creed, one Scripture, one hope of everlasting life? Are our disagreements so great that we may not live together in love, and close in fraternal union and amity? Are we not of one Religion? Do we differ in fundamentals or substantials? Will not conscience worry us?

Will not posterity curse us, if by our divisions we betray the gospel into the hands of the enemies? And if by our mutuall envyings and jealousies and perverse zeal for our severall conceits, we should keep open the breach for all heresies and wickednesse to enter, and make a prey of our poor people's souls: Brethren, you see other bonds are loosed, Satan will make his advantage of these daies of licentiousnesse; let us straiten the bond of Christian unity and love, and help each other against the powers of hell, and joyn our forces against our common enemy."*

SUBSCRIPTION TO ELABORATE CREEDS.

Another great barrier to the reunion of Christendom is *subscription to elaborate Creeds.* This is the great sin of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. Every one of these creeds has separated subscribers from non-subscribers and occasioned the organization of dissenting churches. Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians, and sections of the same, have been separated into different ecclesiastical organizations. These doctrinal divisions have done more than anything else to weaken Protestantism and stay its progress in Europe. These controversies that centre about the creeds of the seventeenth century still continue, but they are not so violent as they used to be. Each of the varieties of Protestantism has won its right to exist and to be recognized in the common family. The differences cannot be solved by conquest, but only by some higher knowledge and better adjustment of the problems through an advance in theological conception and definition. The question now forces itself upon earnest men whether these differences justify ecclesiastical separation, and whether they may not be left to battle their own way to success or defeat

* "Christian Concord, or the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire, with Richard Baxter's Explication and Defence of it, and his Exhortation to Unity," p. 96. London, 1653.

without the help of ecclesiastical fences and traditional prejudices.

"It is not the part of wise Divines, so to swell and increase the number of Fundamentall points, that all Christians, as well learned, as unlearned, should be wholly uncertaine, and ignorant, what, and of what kind those be which are adjudged properly to belong to the Foundation of Religion, & Catholike Faith. But if we should let the matter run on so long, till all the controverted Problemes betwixt Protestants are counted Fundamentall, long since they have grown to too numerous, hereafter they may grow to an almost numberlesse multitude. For this solemne course and practice is observed of many, that what they themselves have added to any Fundamentall axioms as over weight, and what they beleeve to be a consequence of the same, this they presently require of all, to be counted in the number of Fundamentalls. If we grant to any particular Churches, or to their Doctors, this power of creating and multiplying Fundamentalls; all hope is past of the certainty of the Catholike Faith, all hope is gone of a Brotherly communion of the Catholike Church."*

The differences between the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians have nothing to do with the essentials of Protestantism. All alike hold that the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice; that men are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of righteousness or ceremonies; that good works are the fruit of justifying faith and give assurance of acceptance with God; and above all, that salvation is of the divine grace through Jesus Christ, the only mediator and redeemer. These are the great verities of Protestantism, and they are vastly more important than those peculiar doctrines that distinguish the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Arminian systems. After many efforts, renewed from time to time from the Reformation until the present century, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches have

* Bishop Davenant, "An Exhortation on the restoring of Brotherly Communion betwixt the Protestant Churches," p. 121. London, 1641.

combined in the Evangelical Church of Prussia and other German States. This reunion has proved a great success, and has been fruitful for good. There is no sufficient reason why the Lutheran and Reformed Churches should not unite in America. This will be accomplished when theologians are willing to recognize that the few points of difference between them are debatable and tolerable, rising like mountain peaks above the great ranges of doctrine in which there is entire concord.

The Reformed Church was broken up into two great parties calling themselves Calvinists and Arminians. Holland was the centre of this unhappy conflict, but it extended over entire Europe and distracted all the national Churches of the Reformed faith. The Articles of the Synod of Dort were adopted to exclude Arminians from orthodoxy, but they have never given satisfaction to the intermediate party, which has now become the most numerous of all. Arminianism was really a reaction from the supralapsarian Calvinism. It would have been simple justice to cut them both off at the same time. But it is one of the singularities of religious history, that narrow views of sacred things and extreme rigidity of doctrine succeed in maintaining their errors within the orthodox fold, while errors of a more generous type are often cast out. Calvinism cannot be identified with the Five Points of the Synod of Dort. The conflict with Arminianism developed a conflict between the scholastic type of Calvinism and the milder Calvinism of the school of Saumur of France, the Federalists of Holland, and the evangelical Puritanism of Calamy, Baxter, and their associates in Great Britain. These strifes were renewed in America in the eighteenth century, and resulted in the separation of the so-called old

school and new school. Really and historically the one was as old as the other.

The two parties united in happy union in our great American Presbyterian Church and made it broader, more catholic, and fruitful. But this reunion ought to be the beginning and not the end of the reunion of Presbyterian churches. There are no such doctrinal differences in the other branches of Presbyterianism as to justify separation. The Southern Presbyterian Church as a body seems to represent the scholastic type of Calvinism, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church the semi-Arminianism of the milder type of Calvinism. There is a natural tendency of the sterner Calvinists to affiliate with the former and of the milder Calvinists to prefer the latter. Any scheme of Reunion that would prove successful and give satisfaction to all parties should embrace both these Churches.

The largest ecclesiastical body in the United States is the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is distinguished by its Arminian type of doctrine. It is fortunate that the Presbyterian churches do not bear the name of Calvin, and that the Methodist Episcopal Church does not bear the name of Arminius. Indeed, the types of doctrine in these churches do not agree altogether with the names of these two great Protestant divines. The doctrinal system of the Westminster symbols is not the scholastic type of Calvinism of the Swiss or Dutch divines. It is not the type of the French school of Saumur or of the Federalists of Holland. It is the distinct Puritan type of Calvinism. And so the doctrinal system of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as presented in its revised edition of the XXXIX Articles, and the Teachings of John Wesley, is not the Arminianism of Holland, but is semi-Arminianism of the English type. There is

more of English Puritanism in the Methodist Episcopal Church in its practical religious life than there is of Arminianism in its creed. The English Puritanism that is common to these two great branches of the Church of Christ is much more important than the doctrinal variations. In my judgment these differences do not justify separation. Dr. Prentiss says:

"The evangelical Arminianism of Methodism has very close and vital affinities to the Puritan evangelical type of Calvinism; and it is for the interest of the Christian cause to emphasize this fact. So, at least, thought one of the ablest and most sagacious Calvinistic theologians our country has produced. I refer to the late Henry Boynton Smith. In a letter written in January, 1871, and addressed to a distinguished Methodist clergyman, he says:

"'What is it that keeps Methodists and Presbyterians apart? Is it anything *essential*—to the church or even to its *well*-being? For one, I do *not* think that it is. Your so-called "Arminianism" being of *grace*, and not of *nature*, is in harmony with our symbols. It is a wide outlook which looks to an *ecclesiastical* union of Methodists and *Presbyterians*, but I am convinced that it is vital for both, and for Protestantism and for Christianity *vs.* Romanism in this country; and that it is desirable *per se*.

"'I am also persuaded that our differences are merely intellectual (metaphysical), and not moral or spiritual; in short, formal and not material. As to *polity*, too, so far as the Scriptures go, there is no essential difference between us. Your "bishops" I do not object to, but rather like, and our "elders" I think you would like, on due acquaintance. As to Christian work, where you are strong we are weak; but your local preachers and class-leaders, are they really anything more than our "elders"—lay elders—under another name?'"*

With this opinion I entirely concur. I do not underrate the importance of the points of difference. I would not be willing to yield any position of historic Calvinism or to depart from the Puritan type of doctrine. But I

* *Presbyterian Review*, July, 1883, p. 563.

see no reason why Calvinism could not maintain itself in the same ecclesiastical organization with Arminianism. It vindicates its right to live and grow in the two great Episcopal Churches and in Congregational churches. I have such confidence in the principles of Calvinism that I believe they would have a better chance of overcoming Arminianism in a free and chivalrous contest in the same ecclesiastical organization, than they now have, when shut off by themselves and carefully excluded from the largest body of Christians in America. We doubt whether it is practicable or advisable at the present time to consolidate the Presbyterian and the Methodist families, but there might be a Federation and an Alliance for union and co-operation in the general work of the Church of Christ.

The doctrinal differences are not so great as some imagine. No one will suspect Bishop Davenant of any unfaithfulness to Calvinistic principles. He represented the Church of England at the Synod of Dort and concurred in its decisions; and yet he treats of the matters in dispute in the following generous way:

"It appeared lately in the conference of *Lipsigh* that there is an agreement in all these Points. If there be any other things remaining they are rather controversies about words than about matter; rather discords about subtile speculations than fundamentall articles. Such are those which are disputed betwixt Schoolmen, of the Signification of the very words, namely, *Predestination* and *Reprobation;* of the Imaginary order of Priority, and Posteriority betwixt the Eternal Acts of Predestinating and Fore-knowing, of the unsearchable manner of Divine working about all humane actions, whether good or bad, of the necessitie, or contingency of all things, which from Eternity were predestinated, or fore-knowne of God. In such perplexed controversies it cannot bee, but contradictions must arise often-times betwixt Disputants; yet brotherly Concord may be made up and maintained betwixt the churches themselves, as anciently it was pre-

served betwixt the *African* and *Latine* churches, their Doctors in the meantime being of different opinions in the weighty Question of Baptizing of Hereticks. To close up all in a word: those churches (falsely so called) may be forsaken, which possesse not the Foundation of the Apostles preaching: But true Churches ought not to be deserted and pluckt asunder from others for the errors of particular Doctors, because the Faith of Churches leanes not upon the names or writings of single Persons." *

The theological systems of the three great branches of Protestantism have been elaborated by *a priori* logic and by deduction from premises that are not sufficiently accurate and comprehensive. They have all of them departed a long distance from the Scriptures and the Creeds of the Reformation. It has been found necessary in recent times to distinguish between the theology of the Bible and the theology of the schools, between the doctrines of the Confessions of Faith and the doctrines of the theologians. There are now three distinct theological disciplines that have to do with Christian doctrine—Biblical Theology, Symbolics, and Dogmatics. These do not by any means correspond. Protestantism has fallen into a great error in its doctrinal development. It has substituted Protestant scholasticism for mediæval scholasticism, and Protestant Tradition for Roman Catholic Tradition.† It is necessary to overcome this error of the Protestant divines. As Davenant says:

"I conceive it no great difference whether we place unwritten traditions in joint commission with the holy Scriptures, or whether we enforce our controversies on all churches to be knowne and beleeved, under the same necessity of salvation, with a solid and manifest doctrine of the Gospel." ‡

"It would apply some plaister to this soare, if the Divines of both sides would remember, that although all the Articles of the Catholique Faith are plaine, and perspicuous (as written in

* "Exhortation," 1641, p. 151. † See pp. 12, 21. ‡ *l. c.*, p. 3.

God's Word with capitall Letters, so that he that runneth may read them), yet what thence is extracted by the chymistry of man's understanding are divers and of different kinds, most of them so obscure that they escape the eyes of the most sharpe-sighted Divines. We must therefore confidently leane with all our weight on what the Scriptures have decided; but not lay so much stresse on the consequences of our deduction. *Luther* said well out of *Ambrose, Away with Logicians, where wee must beleeve Fishermen. For in the mysteries of Faith the majesty of the matter will not bee pent within the narrow roome of Reason, nor come under the roof of Syllogisme;* wherefore the same *Luther* wisely admonisheth us, that in matters surmounting the capacity of Humane Reason, we beware of Etymologies, Analogies, Consequences, and Examples." *

Another sin of Protestantism as well as of Romanism has been the abuse of the sacred Scriptures by improper methods of interpretation. The grammatical and the historical sense has been neglected. The variety of type of the Biblical authors has been ignored. The Scriptures have been too often interpreted to conform to the Rule of Faith. The Rule of Faith to the Reformers and the Westminster divines was in the plain passages of Scripture, but the Reformed system of doctrine of the scholastic type was often substituted for the Scriptural rule of faith, and thus the Scriptures were forced to correspond with the scholastic system.† It matters little if texts can be adduced in favor of these elaborations of doctrine unless these passages speak in such plain language that they convince mankind in general. As Herbert Palmer, one of the Westminster divines, says: "When we have to do with Scriptures that are ambiguous, then those things produced should not be with too much rigor urged upon other men." ‡

* "Exhortation," pp. 6, 7. † Briggs' "Biblical Study," p. 362.

‡ MS. Minutes of Westminster Assembly, ii., f. 252.

Thomas Gataker, another Westminster divine, tersely says: "Fundamental poynts ly in a narrow compass." * Calybute Downing, another Westminster divine, says: "Fundamentals in points of belief are few." †

Richard Baxter says:

"And indeed he knoweth not man, who knoweth not that universal unity and concord will never be had upon the terms of many, dark, uncertain, humane, or unnecessary things, but only on the terms of things, *few*, *sure*, *plain*, *divine*, and *necessary*." ‡

The names Lutheran, Reformed, and Arminian are the badges of distinct systems of Protestant faith; they will continue so to be. It is fortunate that Arminian is not a name given to any particular Church. The names Reformed and Lutheran smack of the old controversies; they have been rightly abandoned by the United Church of Germany, and the name Evangelical has taken their place. It would be a happy thing for American Christianity if these names could be abandoned here likewise. The names will remain, however, so long as the differences remain. We have to learn the great principle of Unity in Variety. That variety we find in the sacred Scriptures in the four great types of doctrine represented by James, Peter, Paul, and John. We find them in the Old Testament in the Levitical writers, on the one hand, and the prophets on the other, to which we must add as separate types the authors of the Wisdom Literature and of the Psalter. We find these types in all the great religions of the world; they recur in Christian history; they are rooted in the different temperaments of mankind; they manifest themselves in those great types that dom-

* *l. c.*, ii., f. 248.

† "Considerations towards a Peaceable Reformation," p. 4, London, 1641.

‡ "True and only Way of Concord," p. 143, London, 1680.

inate all thinking and acting, that we call Mysticism, Rationalism, and Scholasticism.* Accordingly the Church of Christ, like the Scriptures, should comprehend them all and not exclude any of them. There can be no true unity that does not spring from this diversity. The one Church of Christ is vastly more comprehensive than any one denomination. If the visible Church is to be one, the pathway to unity is in the recognition of the necessity and the great advantage of comprehending the types in one broad, catholic Church of Christ.

"And brotherly unity is the genuine and rare fruit of brotherly love, by every Christian to be endeavoured to the utmost extent of gospell possibility. Nothing in our own spirits of corrupt distemper, carnall ends, or undue prejudice should hinder it; nothing in our brethren sound in the faith, and of godly conversation, though not absolutely agreeing with us in way of disposition, or opinion in all things; Christians cannot be all alike here. All have not the same intellectual complexion. It is a great defect of meekness of wisdome to refuse all agreement with others because they agree not with us in all things. Neither may any other Christian precept hinder us." †

UNIFORMITY OF WORSHIP.

The third great barrier to Christian Union is the insisting upon *uniformity of worship*. This is a special sin of the Church of England. The British prelates pressed this theory of Christian union to an extreme, and persecuted the Puritans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The result of this persecution was civil war and the organization of the three national churches of Great Britain, with a large number of dissenting churches.

Uniformity of worship has proved the fruitful source

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* Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 367 *seq.*

† "The Agreement of the Associated Ministers of the County of Essex," p. 12, London, 1658.

of discord. The points of difference between the Puritans and the Prelatists at the start were not great. The separation greatly increased them. The churches that sprang into existence as the result of the civil wars are farther apart in worship than they were when they were all nestled in the bosom of the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It would have cost the British bishops very little concession to have satisfied the Puritans at the close of the sixteenth century, or even at the Savoy Conference in 1660–61. The Puritans were as much opposed to separation as the Episcopal party and as earnest in their desire for a national establishment. But the bishops refused to make concessions, and insisted upon uniformity and the persecution of non-conformists.* The distractions in religious affairs in British and American church history are in great part due to that fatal blunder. There can be no such thing as uniformity of worship. The separating of non-conforming churches did not lead to uniformity, even in the Church of England itself.

Francis Makemie well puts it at the close of the seventeenth century:

"Therefore let us still value and esteem *unity* in *Doctrine* and *Worship*, and the greater and more weighty matters, preferring it before an exact and accurate uniformity, in every *Punctilio* of *Circumstance* and *Ceremony*, which no nation hath hitherto attained, the *Church of England* not excepted; for what uniformity is between your *Cathedral* and *Parochial* worship? between such churches as have *Organs* and those that want them? between such as *Sing*, or *Chant* the *Service*, and such as do not? between such as read the *whole Service*, and others that *Minse* it, and read but a part? between those that begin with a *free Prayer*, and such as *do not?* And in the same Congregations, what Uniformity is between such as use *Responses*, and such as *do not?* between

* Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 82 *seq.*

such as *bow* to the *East*, or the *Altar*, and such as *do not?* between such as *bow the knee*, and those that only *bow the head*, at the Name or Word, *Jesus?* What *uniformity*—between such as Sing Psalms, and most that *do not?* And I find many of the *Sons* of the church, break *uniformity*, and *Canons*, as well as their neighbours: what *uniformity act* or *Common Prayer*, allows any to begin with a *Prayer of their own*, as the greatest and best have done, though others call it a *Geneva trick?* What uniformity act enjoins *Organs*, and *Singing* Boyes: and where is bowing to the *East* and *Altar*, with all other *Church Honours*, commanded? What warrants the use of the *publick Form* for *private Baptism?* why is the *burial Service* read over any *Dissenters* that are all *excommunicated* by your *Canons?*

"Let me humbly and earnestly, with all Submission, address the *conformable clergy*—in this Island, to instruct their People, that *they* and *we* profess the same Christian and *Protestant Religion*, only with some alterations in external *Ceremonies* and *circumstances;* that we may unite in affection and strength, against the *common enemy* of our Reformation, and concur in the great work of the *Gospel*, for the manifestation of God's glory, and the Conviction, Conversion, and Salvation of Souls in this Island, instructing such as are Ignorant, in the principal and great things of Religion, promoting vertue and true holiness, and Preaching down and reproving all Atheism, irreligion, and profanity, sealing and confirming all by an universal *Copy, pattern and example*, of a holy, and ministerial life and Conversation."*

There are just as great differences at the present time in the worship of the Church of England and her daughters. With the optional parts of the liturgy, the additions that may be made, especially in ceremonial, in robes, in decorations, in altar furniture, and in gestures of bodily worship, uniformity of worship is certainly out of the question. The Reformed Churches and the Methodist Episcopal Church have liturgical forms for sacramental services, and some of the Reformed Churches have optional liturgies for the whole or part of the Sab-

* "Truths in a True Light," pp. 21, 22. Edin., 1699.

bath services. The German Reformed and the Lutheran Churches have liturgical books. But there is no uniformity of worship in any of these Churches. The Presbyterian Churches have Directories of Worship all based on the Westminster Directory, but these have been changed from time to time. They prescribe the order of services, but leave the use of forms of prayer entirely optional. There is an entire lack of uniformity of worship in the Presbyterian churches.* The Congregational and the Baptist churches have still greater diversity in mode and forms of worship. There is greater diversity of worship in the Christian Church now than at any previous period of its history. There is every reason to suppose that this will increase rather than diminish. There is no hope whatever of uniformity of worship.

And yet there is essential unity even in the midst of all this diversity. The five great parts of worship are found in all churches—namely, Common Prayer, Sacred Song, Reading of the Sacred Scriptures, the Sermon, and the Apostolic Benediction. The differences, in the selections of the themes of sermons, and in the passages of Scripture to be read, do not destroy the essential unity in these two parts of public worship. Some Presbyterian Churches have insisted upon uniformity in sacred song no less than the Church of England has insisted upon uniformity in common prayer. We have to thank the Episcopal Churches for our freedom in praise no less than the Presbyterian Churches for our freedom in prayer. Happily there are at present few Presbyterians who insist upon limiting our praise to the Psalm-book and Paraphrases, and the bare, cold worship without organs. It is a singularity of several branches of the Presbyterian Church that they insist upon excluding

* See pp. 48 *seq.*

Christian hymns and musical instruments from divine worship. So far as musical instruments are concerned, these form so important a part in the worship of the ancient temple, and in the great assemblies of the Church in heaven, revealed to us by the Apocalypse, that one is amazed that any one should refuse to employ them. In our opinion the use of musical instruments in the worship of God will be increased in the future. The drift is so strong in that direction that it is impossible to resist it. But if any congregations should prefer to worship without musical instruments they should be allowed to do so. Only they ought not to commit the sin of rending the Church of Christ on such unscriptural and unreasonable grounds as these. The use of Christian hymns began in the Scriptures of the New Testament. There are several hymns in the New Testament writings; so all ages of the Church have produced hymns of beauty and of power. There is no sufficient reason why these should not be used in divine worship. There is no prohibition of their use in Scripture. There is no prescription of the use of the Psalter in public worship either in the Old or the New Testament. The Psalter was a book for the synagogue rather than the temple. If any congregation should desire to limit itself to the Book of Psalms and Paraphrases of Scripture we have no objection, so long as it does not obtrude this opinion upon other congregations. It is a sin and a shame to rend the Church of Christ for such a trifle as this.

In sacred song uniformity has entirely disappeared. Private selections of hymns have taken the place of the official hymn-book of the Churches, and these are used often without regard to denomination. A considerable number of Christian hymns are used in all Protestant churches that do not limit themselves to the Psalms and

Paraphrases. It would be easy to select a hymn-book of considerable size, even from their own books, that would satisfy all of these churches. The freedom here has wrought greater unity than we find in those parts of worship where there is less liberty.

There is greater difficulty in the common prayer. The excellence of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England is generally recognized. But considerable alterations will need to be made in order to make it acceptable to evangelical Christians in general; and there must be the recognition of the liberty of free prayer in a part of the service. I would prefer the use of a prayer-book for all the parts of common prayer at the Sabbath services, with the exception of a brief free prayer at the close of the services, expressing the special needs of the congregation and the day. But the mass of evangelical Christians would not at present go so far as this. It should also be said that there are other admirable prayer-books besides that of the Church of England. The prayer-books of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches have also their advantages; and there is no good reason why we should be confined to forms of prayer of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or those of earlier date. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ought to be able to enrich a prayer-book that would adequately express the worship of our day. The Churches that use prayer-books should direct their energies to enriching them by removing obsolete parts and adding more appropriate prayers from other service books and modern divines. If an effort were to be made to enrich the prayer-books similar to that which has been so successful in the hymn-books, it would meet with equal if not greater success. There is a movement in that direction in the American Episcopal Church which

is worthy of commendation. But it is probable that unofficial hands will have to lead in this noble work. A very successful effort of this kind has been made in the Church of Scotland.

On the other hand, those Churches that have no prayer-books should overcome their prejudices against their use. These prejudices are largely traditional, and are owing to the fact that the Puritan fathers had to battle for liberty against uniformity. But it is a happy circumstance that the Presbyterian Churches have not taken any official action against the use of liturgical books. Any Presbyterian congregation has the right at the present time to use a book of prayer if it see fit, and some congregations avail themselves of the privilege in whole or in part. There are great advantages in written forms of prayer. As Richard Baxter says:

"The famousest Divines in the Church of God, even *Luther*, *Zwinglius*, *Melancthon*, *Calvin*, *Perkins*, *Sibbs*, and abundance of non-conformists of greatest name in *England*, did ordinarily use a form of prayer of their own, before their Sermons in the Pulpit, and some of them in their families too. Now, these men did it not through idleness or through temporizing, but because some of them found it best for the people, to have oft the same words; and some of them found such a weakness of memory, that they judged it the best improvement of their own gifts." *

We hail, with gratitude to God, the noble declaration of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church—

"that in all things of human ordering or human choice relating to modes of worship and discipline or to traditional customs, this Church is ready, in the spirit of love and humility, to forego all preferences of her own."

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* "Cure of Church Divisions," p. 183. London, 1670.

We sincerely hope that other Christian Churches are ready to meet them in the same generous spirit.

The greatest difficulty remains in the celebration of the Sacraments. Many of the Baptist churches hold that immersion is the only mode of baptism. This implies that all who have not been baptized by immersion are not members of the visible Church, and that therefore there are no other visible churches than these Baptist churches. The doctrine of close communion is a necessary consequence of this doctrine, for no one can rightly partake of the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized. We apprehend that our Baptist brethren do not realize how intolerant this position really is. It is more intolerant than the doctrine that refuses to recognize the validity of the ordination of the ministry of the non-Episcopal Churches, for this doctrine only denies the ministry of these Churches, while it recognizes their baptism as valid, and that they and their people are members of the visible Church of Christ. But the Baptist doctrine, with one blow, destroys the ministry and the ecclesiastical position of all the people of other Christian churches, by refusing to recognize the validity of their baptism.

After all the scholarly discussion upon the subject of the primitive mode of baptism, the Baptist churches are in a small minority of the Christian world on this question. Baptism by immersion is not distinctly commanded in the New Testament, and it is by no means clear that immersion was the mode by which our Saviour and His apostles were baptized. Our Baptist brethren have not been able to convince the ministry of the other Christian churches, who are equally competent with themselves to interpret the Bible and the first Christian century. I do not believe that Christ and His apostles

were baptized by immersion. I would not hesitate to follow any evidence that could be produced to prove the Baptist position. Immersion would be a small price to pay for Christian Unity. But my study of the question has convinced me that Jewish ceremonial baptisms were by sprinkling or pouring; that such ceremonial baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament; that the symbolism of baptism is in favor of pouring rather than submersion; that partial immersion of the body and not submersion is all that can be proved from the New Testament and the testimony of Christian antiquity; and that there is nothing essential in the mode of baptism. If we should concede, with many scholars who are not Baptists, that immersion was the primitive mode of baptism, it would by no means follow that the mode of baptism should be by immersion throughout all time. It seems to me that some Baptists sin as greatly in their insistance upon uniformity in the ceremony of baptism, as some Episcopalians in insisting upon uniformity in certain ceremonies of worship, and some Presbyterians in insisting upon uniformity in psalm-singing. If the Baptists could affirm, from their point of view, that the baptism celebrated in other Christian churches is valid as to its essence, owing to the application of water in the name of the blessed Trinity, though irregular in form, the barrier would be removed. Other churches recognize baptism by immersion as valid, and the ceremony might by common consent be left to the conscientious preference of Associations of churches, congregations or even individuals.

It is not credible that the Redeemer would refuse the grace of regeneration and communion in His Church to those who trust in Him and follow Him, even if they have made some mistakes in the mode of baptism. We

cannot think that the Church ceased to exist in all those Christian centuries in which the practice of immersion ceased, and that it was reserved for the 17th century to give birth to the true and pure Church of baptized saints.

The most serious difficulty in the department of worship, is in the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Here diversity of doctrine determines to some extent the ceremonies that are used. The objections that the Puritans made against the ceremony of kneeling have been removed by time. No one would impute to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church any adoration of the bread and the wine, such as was made by Crypto-Roman Catholics in the Church of England in the sixteenth century. The Presbyterian method of sitting at tables has been generally abandoned on account of its great inconvenience. The present fashion of sitting in pews during the celebration is a modern practice that has little to recommend it. It might be well to return to the more reverent postures of kneeling or standing in the solemn partaking of the Lord's Supper. In the Protestant Episcopal Church, the ceremonies allow people of widely different views to partake of the same bread and wine in the same service. In the Evangelical churches of Germany, Lutheran and Reformed partake of the same bread and the same cup. In the Presbyterian and Congregational churches Calvinists and Zwinglians sit down together at the communion feast. I would rather partake of the Lord's Supper with one who believed in the real presence of Christ, even though he were a Lutheran, than commune with one who denied the real presence, even though he were a Presbyterian. I see no sufficient reason why all of these may not hold their variant opinions and yet join in the Supper of the Lord.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

John Bergius, the court preacher of Brandenburg, well said:

"Whosoever hath this gracious help and presence of Christ ever before his eyes, will easily forget that unprofitable strife of words about such a presence of an invisible, untouchable, incomprehensible Body, wherein he cannot comfort himselfe, and whereof he cannot tell what effect or benefit it hath; and will tremble again and be ashamed before the face of Christ, to condemne or to cast out of Christ's Communion those that heartily believe and set before their eyes onely his helpfull and gracious effectual presence. Whereas on the contrary it may be justly questioned of many, that quarrel so much of Christ's corporal being on earth, whether they truely believe that he is in Heaven, and doth see and hear and will judge such unchristian contentions." *

TRADITIONALISM.

Traditionalism is another great barrier in the way of Christian Union. There are in human nature two forces which, like action and reaction, tend to keep everything in stability—the conservative and the progressive. Either of these apart is hurtful. Their combination is a great excellence. There can be no improvement without progress. There can be no genuine improvement unless the previous attainments have been conserved. Conservatism is healthful, but it too often reacts until it becomes mere Traditionalism. This is at present one of the chief barriers to the reunion of Christendom.

The United States of America contain the largest body of Christians in any nation under heaven and the

* "The Pearle of Peace and Concord," p. 47.

greatest variety of ecclesiastical organizations, representing nearly all the national Churches of Europe and the bodies of Christians dissenting from them. These all have entire freedom to develop in accordance with their own internal principles and organic life. Here the greatest variation in Christendom is to be found. Here, then, the problem of Christian Union must be worked out. The great variations in Christianity that exist side by side in America at the present time are, with few exceptions, not of American origin and growth. The variations simply reflect the differences that exist in the different nations of Europe. They were brought to America by the colonists from Europe. In many respects these American daughters are nearer to the mother Churches of Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than the daughters that have remained in the original homestead. In America there is a tenacious adherence to opinions and customs that are regarded in Europe as antiquated. This traditionalism is quite remarkable in view of the great progress that has been made by the Churches of the same faith and order in Europe.

The Reformed Church exists in two bodies—the German and the Dutch. The differences are chiefly in traditional usages, and these are the only things that stand in the way of the combination of them both with the Presbyterians in one organism. There was a splendid opportunity of combining British Presbyterianism with the Reformed churches in 1744, under the advice of the Synods of North and South Holland. It failed, owing to the strife in the Presbyterian Church and the division of the American Presbyterians into two rival synods.* Another effort was made soon after the

* See Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," pp. 284 *seq.*

American Revolution, but it did not succeed. It is desirable that these efforts should be speedily renewed. There is no doctrinal difficulty in the way, because the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession are acceptable to both bodies. The liturgical books of the Reformed Churches are optional books, and would continue so to be in the united Church. The differences in usage in other respects are in the government and worship of the congregations. Here each congregation should be left free to follow its own customs. I can see no difficulties that might not be readily removed by a conference of divines who really desire the consummation of organic union.

The American churches are in general over-conservative in matters of doctrine and worship, but in their forms of government and practical religion they have adapted themselves to the altered conditions and circumstances of the new world. They collectively bear the marks of the American national life. They have common features that distinguish them from the churches of Europe, that make them all constituent parts of American Christianity.

In some respects the American churches are traditional and in other respects radical when compared with the churches of Europe. There is thus an internal inconsistency that will ere long produce great changes that may be little less than revolutionary. The practical side of Christianity will ere long overcome the traditionalism in doctrine and worship, and reconstruct it on broader lines and in more comprehensive schemes; so that there will be better correspondence between the doctrines and worship and the real American Christian life. These traditions are those of foreign national Churches that grew up out of historical circumstances that have long

past and that are no longer appropriate to the circumstances of a new age and a new continent. Other traditions originated in old conflicts that have passed away, leaving no other trace behind than those old banners and battle-flags, with which it seems necessary that the denominations should parade once in a while.

ALLIANCES AND FEDERAL UNIONS.

There is a great movement in the direction of alliances of kindred Churches. The Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian system embraces all Churches of the Reformed faith and Presbyterian order throughout the world. They unite on the consensus of the Reformed Confessions. An effort was made to define that consensus, but it was clearly seen that such an effort must lead to the construction of a new creed, and would develop differences and conflicts. It was accordingly abandoned. It seems better to leave the work of defining that consensus to historians.

The Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal Churches have also constituted world-wide Alliances in a similar way. This is a great step in the direction of Christian Union. But a greater one should soon be made in an alliance of these Alliances in a more general council. The Evangelical Alliance has done a good work in the past, but it is a voluntary association of kindred spirits, and is in no sense a representative body. There can be no effective Alliance unless that Alliance represents the Churches that constitute it; in an assembly of delegates chosen for conference. The times are well-nigh ripe for such an Alliance of the Churches in America; and we may anticipate that there will be such an Alliance for the Christian world at no very great distance in the future.

But these alliances are only preparatory to closer union. The Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of America are considering whether they may not unite in Federal union in some general representative body while they preserve their own distinguishing features in different classes, presbyteries and synods. It is probable that this ideal will be attained in a few years.

In the meanwhile the American Episcopal Church has issued a proposal for the reunion of Christendom on the basis of four terms; and this proposal has received the endorsement of the Lambeth Conference representing the Church of England and her daughters. These proposals, as revised by the Lambeth Conference, are:

"That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made toward Home Reunion: (*a*) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as 'containing all things necessary to salvation,' and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith. (*b*) The Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith. (*c*) The two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him. (*d*) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

"That this Conference earnestly requests the constituted authorities of the various branches of our communion, acting, so far as may be, in concert with one another, to make it known that they hold themselves in readiness to enter into brotherly conference (such as that which has already been proposed by the Church in the United States of America) with representatives of other Christian communions in the English-speaking races, in order to consider what steps can be taken either toward corporate Reunion or toward such relations as may prepare the way for fuller organic unity hereafter.

"That this Conference recommends as of great importance, in

tending to bring about Reunion, the dissemination of information respecting the standards of doctrine and the formularies in use in the Anglican Church ; and recommends that information be disseminated, on the other hand, respecting the authoritative standards of doctrine, worship, and government adopted by the other bodies of Christians into which the English-speaking races are divided."

In these Resolutions, the Lambeth Conference adopted the movement begun some months since by the House of Bishops of the American Episcopal Church, and has thereby made it a world-wide movement. If I understand these terms aright, they are not to be interpreted in the special sense of any particular party in the Anglican communion, but are to be taken in that sense that is common to all of these parties in the Church of England and in the American Episcopal Church. Presbyterians are entitled to look at them from the point of view of the Low-Church and the Broad-Church parties, and it is not fair to interpret them as if they involved the special position of the High-churchmen.

Committees of conference have been appointed by the several denominations in America on the basis of these proposals, and there are good reasons for the hope that something may be accomplished.

I adhere to what I said when these terms were first proposed :

The four terms that are set forth therein as "essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom," are in my judgment entirely satisfactory, provided nothing more is meant by their authors than their language expressly conveys. There is room for some difference of interpretation, but these terms ought to be received in the same generous manner in which they are offered, in the hope that the

differences will be removed by conference and discussion.

No Presbyterian can consistently object to (*a*) "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God," or (*c*) "the two sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, administered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him."

It might be objected that (*b*) "the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith," is too narrow a plank for a summary of Christian doctrine, and that it ignores the subsequent history of doctrine in Christendom. But Presbyterians can hardly exact from other religious bodies the maximum of the Westminster Standards. If Episcopalians are willing to waive their own doctrinal standards in order to union upon the fundamental creed of Christendom, I do not see with what propriety other denominations can refuse to meet them on this common platform. It is not proposed that the denominations should abandon their own symbols of faith, but that they should find a common ground for unity.

The fourth term, (*d*) "the historic episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of the Church," gives more room for difference of opinion. But it is certain if the English bishops had offered these terms to the Westminster divines, there would have been no separation. The English Presbyterians offered to unite on the basis of "the reduction of Episcopacy under the form of synodical government," proposed by Archbishop Ussher, but the English bishops declined.* Presbyterians are bound

* Briggs' "American Presbyterianism," p. 80.

by their own history to meet the Episcopalians on this platform. If the House of Bishops mean to advance thus far, they have taken a great step toward the reunion of Christendom. The delicate and difficult questions involved in the adaptation of the historic Episcopate might be removed by friendly conference in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The House of Bishops say nothing of the Book of Common Prayer or the Canons of the Church. We understand that the following clause refers to them: "That in all things of human ordering or human choice relating to modes of worship and discipline or to traditional customs, this Church is ready, in the spirit of love and humility, to forego all preferences of her own." If this reference be correct, this proposal is all that could be reasonably required.*

The work of Christian Union is a work which begins in every family, and which rises in greater and greater sweeps of influence until it covers the nation and the Christian world and is absorbed in the innumerable company about the throne of God and the Lamb.

"All this while hitherto we have striven (long enough) in words one against another for Religion with much zeale and heat; it is now high time for us to begin once of all sides to contend and strive about this; who can most manifest and exercise his Religion and Faith with the best Christian workes and that towardes his Adversaries, that one might say to another in the words of the Apostle *James, Shew me thy Faith by thy workes, and I will shew thee my Faith by my workes* (James ii. 18). This would indeed be the most effectual Demonstration, which every plain Christian would be able to see, touch, and feel, who otherwise cannot so well satisfie himself with a naked Demonstration of bare words and arguments." †

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* *Presbyterian Review*, viii., p. 132.

† John Bergius, "The Pearle of Peace and Concord," p. 180. London, 1655.

CHAPTER X.

THITHER.

WE have seen that there is a drift in modern Christianity away from the Standards of the Reformation and the Symbols of the 16th and 17th centuries; that in some respects the leaders of the Churches have hardened and sharpened the doctrines by excessive definition in the field of Protestant polemics; that in other respects the Churches have fallen back from the high ideals of the 17th century; that there have been departures from the Symbols of Faith into various forms of heterodoxy; and that there are great perplexities in the minds of thoughtful Christians of our day. We have also seen that the barriers between the denominations, erected chiefly in the 17th century, have been broken through, and to a large extent, broken down, and that the spirit of Christian unity is moving over the troubled waters to bring peace and order out of the confusion and chaos of sects. Whither shall we go in our striving? What shall be the ideal to which we shall direct our efforts? What other ideal can a Christian man set before him than Jesus Christ his Saviour, union and communion with Him, complete conformity to His will, and entire assimilation to His likeness? What other goal can an earnest scholar aim at than real orthodoxy, the truth of God, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Progress in religion, in doctrine, and in life is demanded of our age of the world more than of any previ-

ous age. Every Christian should make up his mind to follow the guidance of the divine Spirit, who will fulfil the promise of the Master and lead us unto all truth. There has never been a period in which the scholar had such a vast circle of truth in which to study. There has never been a time when the Church had such a vast work to do for the Master. The possibilities for thinking and for working are wonderful—the ideals set before us are magnificent. All other departments of human learning are advancing, every other human enterprise is pushing with enormous energy. Is the Church of Jesus Christ to drift along in the rear, too conservative to make any more progress than it is forced to make; too reactionary to be aggressive, except in attack upon those who would excite it by criticism and stimulate it by discoveries to take its proper place in the advancing host of God? Research, speculation, investigation, invention, discovery are everywhere welcomed save in theology. Novelties are everywhere else earnestly sought for, but novelties in theology are regarded as little better than heresies. But there are Christian scholars who will not pull back with the reactionaries, who refuse to sleep with the conservatives, who decline to drift idly with the stream; who are determined to steer toward the goal of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ; who will use all the energy of human nature and all the results of modern learning in theological research, in religious discovery, and in ethical invention, looking to their enthroned Saviour for strength, and following the guidance of the divine Spirit in quest of the truth, the sanctifying truth of God.

Progressive theology as the true orthodoxy has to consider three classes of doctrines: (1) those that have been defined by the consensus of Christendom; (2) those

that are in dispute between the Christian Churches; and (3) those that still need investigation and which have not yet been defined by the consensus or the discord of Christendom.

THE CONSENSUS OF CHRISTENDOM.

The first class of doctrines that we have to consider are those which have been defined by the consensus of Christendom. These may be regarded as the solid attainments of Christianity. It is not at all likely that these will be changed by progressive theology. They will be modified to some extent by the light shed upon them from other doctrines, but such modification will be unessential. Those doctrines upon which Roman Catholics and Protestants agree are the basis of progress and the foundation upon which the Reunion of Christendom must take place. The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches are agreed as to nine-tenths or more of the contents of Christianity. Until the year of the Reformation they were one Church. All the genuine achievements of fifteen Christian centuries are common property. The Reformers were born in the mediæval Church, were baptized therein, were trained in its sacred doctrines and sacraments, and many of them were ordained by its pious bishops. The Reformers denounced the papacy as a hierarchical constitution, but they did not deny the Church. They were forced to separate from the Church of Rome, but they did not create a new Church; they reformed the Church of Northern Europe, while the Church in Southern Europe remained unreformed under the tyranny of Papacy. Those so-called Protestants who refuse to recognize the Roman Catholic Church as a true Church of Jesus Christ, are guilty of heresy and schism. Such a theory leaves

Protestantism hanging in the air with fifteen centuries of Church History beneath it, cuts it off from any connection with historical Christianity, makes it a new religion of the 16th century, and gives over to the devil the ancient and mediæval Church with all its splendid array of saints and martyrs. It is a stab at the vitals of any Christian Church to cut it off from the one body of Christ and sever it from the great tree of life that was planted at Pentecost and that has grown like the cedar twig of Ezekiel's vision until it has well-nigh filled the earth.

IS ROME AN ALLY?

Protestants and Roman Catholics are agreed as to the essentials of Christianity. Our common faith is based on the so-called Apostles' Creed, our worship on the Lord's Prayer, our morals upon the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Who will venture to say that the Roman Catholic Church is not as faithful to these foundations of our common religion as Protestants? Taking our stand on the Apostles' Creed we must add to the articles of faith on which we are agreed all the doctrinal achievements of the Church for fifteen centuries, the doctrine of the unity of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Trinity, original sin and human depravity, salvation by divine grace, the absolute need of the atonement of Jesus Christ. On all these great doctrines of our religion Romanism and Protestantism are one. Here we are allies, and it is our common task to proclaim these doctrines to the heathen world, and to overcome by them all forms of irreligion and infidelity in Christian lands. Differences about justification by faith, and salvation by the divine grace alone, and the authority of the Church as regards the

determination of the canon of Scripture and its interpretation, ought not to prevent our co-operation and alliance in the great work of proclaiming the common faith. Our conflict over the doctrines in which we differ would be more fruitful in good results, if our contest should be based upon concord and alliance in the common faith; if our contest could be narrowed to the real points of difference, and conducted in a brave, chivalrous, and loving manner.

Taking our stand upon the Lord's Prayer, we observe that we are agreed as to the greater part of Christian worship. We worship God in common, in morning and evening assemblies, by prayer, songs of praise, the reading and preaching of the Scriptures, and the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The matter of this worship is for the most part common in both these great bodies of Christians. I have heard sermons in Roman Catholic churches in Europe which were more evangelical and less objectionable than many sermons I have heard in leading Protestant Churches in Berlin, London, and New York. It is well known that the Protestant books of liturgy contain a considerable amount of material derived from the old mass books, and they are all the more valuable for that. Roman Catholic Baptism has many superstitions connected with it, but the essentials of baptism are there in the baptism by the minister in the name of the Holy Trinity.* Roman Catholic observance of the Lord's Supper is connected with the worship of the materials of the Supper under the doctrine that they are really the body and blood of the divine Lord; but who can deny that pious souls by faith really partake of the body and blood of

* See pp. 183 *seq.*

Christ in this holy sacrament, notwithstanding the errors in which it is enveloped?

In all matters of worship we are in essential accord with Roman Catholics, and we ought not to hesitate to make an alliance with them, so far as possible, to maintain the sanctity of the Sabbath as a day of worship, and to proclaim to the world the necessity of worshipping God in His house, and of becoming members of His Church by baptism, and of seeking union and communion with the Saviour by Christian worship, the study of the Scriptures, and the observance of the Lord's Supper. With this recognition of concord, Protestants may debate with Romanists in a friendly manner, and seek to overcome their errors, remove the excrescences they have heaped upon that simple worship in the spirit and in truth, which seems to us more in accordance with the Scriptures and the wishes of our Saviour. In the great constituent parts of prayer—invocation, adoration, thanksgiving, confession of sin, petition, intercession and consecration,—Roman Catholics and Protestants are in agreement. In Christian song the differences are still less. If our hymn-books were stripped of hymns from the ancient and mediæval Church, and from modern Roman Catholics, they would be bare indeed.

In the sphere of Christian morals we take our common stand on the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Romanism and Protestantism are agreed as to the vast majority of all questions of morals. It is true there is a great deal of immorality in the Roman Catholic Church in some countries, and we think it may be shown that as a rule Protestantism is productive of better morals than Romanism; but this, after all, is a question of more or less, and to say the least, Protestantism has little to boast of.

"To-day, as related to heathen peoples and religions, the Judas Iscariot of Christianity is Christendom itself. At first, Christianity had no Christendom at all behind it; had behind it only the incomparable personality and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Peter, Paul and John had no Constantine nor Charlemagne nor Henry VIII. to carry. There was then no Christian England, forcing opium on heathen China; no Christian America, driving Chinamen across the continent from San Francisco to New York; no sailors, Greek, Catholic or Protestant, defiling every seaport of every continent and island. If Christendom were only Christian really, how much longer would China probably be Confucian? or Japan Buddhistic? or India Brahmanic? or Turkey Mohammedan?"*

On all these practical questions of Christianity it is of the highest importance that the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches should make an alliance. Their joint efforts would have an influence upon public and private morals such as the world has not yet witnessed. We may agree to differ and debate on all questions where there is discord. But it is folly for us to waste our energies in antagonism, when we are agreed on the vast majority of questions that come before the public, and when co-operation and alliance would be productive of such vast good.

The differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches since the Reformation consist chiefly in two things: (1), The Roman Catholic Church declined to follow the Protestant reformers when they reformed the Churches in Northern Europe. (2), It took a conservative position and refused to advance into the higher doctrinal and ethical development of Protestantism. On these two principles all the differences in faith and practice rest. Here the battle for the

* R. D. Hitchcock, "Eternal Atonement," p. 298. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888.

truth and right must go on until the one side or the other achieve the victory, or rather until both are reconciled in something higher and better, in a new and greater Reformation of the Church, when the sections of truth conserved by each shall be pieced together in the whole truth; and the errors of both that cannot be assimilated will be cast aside.

THE DISSENSUS OF CHRISTENDOM.

The second class of doctrines that we have to consider, are those in regard to which the Christian Churches are divided. We have already studied these in the previous chapter, and have seen that the differences are of less importance than they used to be, now that Protestant polemics has been overwhelmed by irenics. Accordingly it is in favor in some quarters to gather up all the questions of main importance upon which there is concord, especially in Protestantism, and ignore the old questions of discord, and thus construct a consensus as a basis of Christian union.

It is thought by some that a simple creed is the pathway to Christian union. I shall not deny that such a creed is desirable. It might be well to formulate the consensus of Christendom, the consensus of Protestantism, the consensus of the Reformed Churches, and so on. This will all be accomplished in good time by the science of Symbolics. These are historical questions for scholarly investigation, and not for official action of Christian Churches.

But true theological progress cannot content itself with such a consensus. The questions debated between the Churches since the Reformation are important questions. Our fathers did not think and labor and suffer in vain. The creeds of the Reformation are the precious

symbols of our faith. We cannot give them up. They are the battle-flags that have been carried in many a field of intellectual and moral contest, and they bear the signs of conflict and victory. The battle must be fought out to the end. Truth is mighty, and in the end, it will prevail. The battle will disclose the higher principles in whose equity alone reconciliation can be made.

The Westminster Standards are the banners of Puritanism, the most precious doctrinal achievement of the 17th century. Let us never fail to honor them and maintain them! But let us not put them in a false position, or prove unfaithful to their trust. Let us never forget the principle of liberty of conscience for which the Puritan fathers fought and died. They have enshrined it in the Westminster Confession.* They do not claim infallibility, inerrancy, or completion. They do not propose to speak the final word in theology; they tell us that, "The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error," † and that "all synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith and practice, but to be used as a help in both." ‡ Those are not true disciples of the Westminster faith who would confine Congregationalism and Presbyterianism for all time to the definitions of the symbols, and make them the barriers to progress. They thereby transgress the Standards themselves in their essential principles and their express language. We must recognize that there are inadequate statements and even errors of doctrine in the Westminster Standards and the great creeds of the Reformation. We should be ready to adjust them to the higher knowl-

* See p. 159.

† "Westminster Confession," xxv. 5.

‡ "Westminster Confession," xxxi. 3.

edge of our times and the still higher knowledge that the coming period of progress in theology will give us.

The only hope of reconciliation of differences, and of removal of errors, is by advance into the whole truth of religion, doctrine, and morals. The differences between Romanism and Protestantism are, as we have seen, chiefly that Romanism declined to give up its errors and to advance into the new truth of the Reformation. So it is that the differences between the churches of Protestantism are due to the same essential reasons. Even Protestantism has retained not a few mediæval errors while it has also multiplied its own errors. Protestant churches have all come to a halt in their progress. The differences between the denominations are partly in errors retained and partly in progress declined. Harmony and reconciliation are in the pathway of progress.

Theological progress is not in the direction of simplicity, but of variety and complexity. We cannot retreat in theological definition; we must advance, in this scientific age. The Apostles' Creed represents the simple faith of the early Church; we cannot ignore Christian history and go back to that. The Ante-Nicene Church was crude in its theology; we cannot fall back on the Nicene Creed as a complete definition of Christianity. The inheritance of the Truth is more precious than external Unity. Progress is to be made by more exact definitions in theological science, not by suppression of truth and ignoring of differences in order to a superficial and transient harmony. Every Christian should follow the guidance of the divine Spirit into all truth, and regard every truth, even the smallest, as unspeakably precious; and yet we should have in mind the proportions of truth, and bear on our banner the golden

words of Rupertus Meldenius, *In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas.*

The chief reasons of difference are imperfect knowledge and an indisposition to follow the truth sincerely and wholly without regard to consequences. A higher knowledge will in time remove the differences. The barriers seem impassable when we keep in the low levels of doctrine and life. When we climb the mountains and ascend the peaks of Christianity the fences and hedges of human conceits are the merest trifles.

NEW DOCTRINES.

The third group of doctrines that now confronts us consists of those which have not been sufficiently considered, and which have only partially been defined by the Churches. Here is the field in which progressive theology is chiefly at work at present, and here are the doctrines that are to be opened up in the future. The symbols of the Churches do not define them, and Christian scholars cannot be restrained from using the resources of modern learning, criticism, invention, speculation, and logical development in their investigation and statement.

The confession of a church is its constitution. It restricts liberty and binds the minister to the definitions that have been made either in strict or liberal subscription. But it is also a pledge and guarantee of liberty of investigation and of statement in all matters upon which the faith of the church has not been defined. The faith of the church cannot be determined by majorities in ecclesiastical courts or by the dictation of ecclesiastical demagogues or the theses of little popes in the different denominations. The big pope is worthy of much greater consideration than a thousand little ones. Protestant-

ism knows no other master than Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

The Westminster Standards are not the barriers to progress. They are the barriers to reaction. They are the stepping-stones of progress; they guide the advance in Christian theology. They show what has been accomplished in the past; they point out the matters of difference and controversy; they open the questions undetermined. The statements of the Westminster Symbols are by no means perfect. They are capable of revision and improvement. But progress is not in that direction. That is a work for the rear-guard of the Church. True progress is made by advance into new fields, and in an irenic discussion of the points of difference between the denominations.

"What is Christianity? This question is put and pressed to-day as never before. And sectarian answers are behind the time. No Creed of Orient or Occident, ancient or modern, has spoken the final word. Scientific theology has still its errand and its rights, though the more we refine, the more we differ. The time will come, when the more we differ, the better we shall be agreed: differing in the smaller, agreeing in the larger things; far apart in the spreading branches, knit together in the sturdy trunk." *

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

One of the freshest fields for discussion in our day is the Bible itself. The Bible is the wonder of the world, a treasure of truth for all ages. It is a surprise of modern scholarship that after so many centuries so little is known of the Bible. The Bible has become a new book to modern Biblical scholars—for they have stripped off the crust of traditional theories and found it to be the richest mine of heavenly truth. The modern study of the Bible has taken the form of Biblical criticism.

* R. D. Hitchcock, "Eternal Atonement," p. 84.

This is a critical age of the world, and recent criticisms have been stronger and more comprehensive than any previous criticisms. Criticism is a method of knowledge; it reviews and re-examines all the processes of human thought and tests all its products. Man is fallible. Even the best of men are so liable to error that we cannot be sure of the truth of their work until we have reviewed it for ourselves and tested it at every point. It is necessary that we should know the truth. We cannot rest with confidence upon anything that is uncertain. Criticism is the test of the certainty of knowledge and the method of its verification. Every scholar in our days who would be exact in his methods and sure of his results will test his own work by the methods of criticism; and he will not accept the work of another until he has submitted it to the same tests himself, or has seen it tested by others.

The scholars of previous centuries were not so exact in their methods and were less careful in their work. They have handed down an immense mass of learning, the most of which they received by tradition from others. They accepted it without criticism, and they transmitted it as they received it. The modern scholar cannot accept this mass without criticism any more than he can accept the new learning of the present age. It is necessary to pass it all through the fires of criticism before we can give it our confidence and build upon it for the future.

Criticism has a twofold work; it is destructive of error, and it is constructive of truth. Its first work is destructive. The error must be destroyed before the truth can be given its place. This is the easier work of criticism. It is less difficult to pull down than to build up; to see a fault than to appreciate an excellence; to kill an error

than to quicken a germ of truth. We are not surprised that the great majority of critics have been destructive, and that the chief work of criticism, thus far, has been the destruction of error; but constructive criticism has not been wanting.

1. There can be no doubt that recent criticisms have considerably weakened the evidences from miracles and predictive prophecy. To many minds it would be easier to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the divinity of Jesus Christ if there were no such things as Miracles and Prediction in the sacred Scriptures. The older apologetic made too much of the external marvels of miracle-working and sought to find in history the fulfillment of the minute details of prediction. But it has been found easier to prove the divinity of Christ without miracles. Belief in miracles needs to be sustained by faith in Jesus Christ. It is necessary to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures as the product of the spirit of prophecy before we can advance with profit into the special field of prediction. Even the Scriptures themselves recognize miracle-working and prediction in false prophets, and teach us to distinguish the true miracle and the true prediction from the false by their internal character and their conformity to truth and fact. Recent criticisms have brought these lines of evidences into better accord with the representations of the Bible itself.

The Old Testament is full of Theophanies; and in the New Testament there are many Christophanies and Pneumatophanies. These manifestations of God in the forms of space and time and in the sphere of physical nature are of vast importance in the unfolding of divine revelation. These are the centres from which miracles and prophecies flow. If there were such theophanies or

divine manifestations in the successive stages of divine revelation, then we should expect miracles in the physical world and prophecy in the world of man. If Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, then prophecy and miracles are exactly what we should expect so long as He abode in the flesh in this world. If the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and He was present with the churches of the apostles in the peculiar manner of external manifestations of pneumatophany, such as are described in the New Testament, we are not surprised at the occurrence of miracle-working and prophecy during that period; and it seems to be the most natural thing in the world that when these divine manifestations ceased, miracle-working and prophecy ceased with them. If then, on the one side, recent criticisms have weakened the independent value of the evidences from miracles and prediction, they have, on the other side, given something vastly better in their place. They have called the attention to the presence of God with His people in external manifestations of theophany to guide the advancing stages of the history of redemption. Here is the citadel of our religion, to which all its lines of evidence converge, the centre of the entire revelation and religion from which prophecy and miracle-working issue in all their variety of form. The evidences from miracles and prophecy gain in strength when they are placed in their true relations to the theophany in which the unity of the evidence is found.

2. Another fault of the older apologetic was in laying too much stress upon the external evidence and in neglecting the internal evidence for the inspiration and the canonicity of Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church bases the authority of the Scriptures on the authority of the Church. The Reformers rejected this external au-

thority and found the evidences for the Scriptures in the Scriptures themselves, in the voice of the living God speaking to the believer in them and through them. As Luther said, "The Church cannot give any more authority or power than it has of itself. A council cannot make that to be of Scripture which is not by nature of Scripture."* The later Reformed and Lutheran scholastics abandoned the position of the Reformers and fell back upon the external evidence of tradition in the synagogue and the church. In this they committed a sad blunder, which greatly injured the evidences for the inspiration and the canonicity of the Bible. Recent criticisms have weakened this line of evidence and given us something much better in its place. They have revived the views of the Reformers and the Puritans and have strengthened the lines of the internal evidences. Here, again, the order of evidence has been changed. We do not first prove canonicity, and then the inspiration of the Scriptures, but the reverse: we first prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, and then the canonicity is a matter of course.

3. The traditional evidence also overestimated the external authority of the Bible, in accordance with the familiar saying that the Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. This saying is, however, a caricature of the Protestant position. The Protestant religion is the religion of Jesus Christ, as He is revealed to us in the Bible. The Reformers recognized the living God, the risen and reigning Christ, in the Bible; and they regarded the Scriptures as a means of grace to bring Christ to us and to bring us to Christ. The later theology neglected the doctrine of the Scriptures as a

* "Disputatio exc. theolog. Joh. Eccii et Lutheri hist.," iii., 129 *seq.*

means of grace, and laid undue stress on the doctrine of their inspiration. It substituted the authority of the external word of the letter of Scripture, for the internal word of the Master of the Scripture. Recent criticisms have in part overcome this fault. They have pointed out the fault of building our faith on a book, instead of the living God and Saviour. They have called more attention to the God of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New Testament as the very substance, the light and glory of the Bible.

4. Recent criticisms have been very great in the departments of the text and the literature of the Bible. These have been reorganized as branches of science, with exact methods and well-defined principles, which lead to definite and reliable results. There can be no doubt that there has been a large amount of destructive criticism here which has disturbed the faith and unsettled the convictions of multitudes.

The authority of the old textus receptus of the New Testament has been destroyed, but criticism has given in its place the critical New Testaments of Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort. The authority of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament has been undermined; but critics the world over are laboring to secure a better text of the Old Testament; and they will succeed in a reasonable time. The doctrine of verbal inspiration has been destroyed, and it has been shown that inspiration lies back of the external form or letter of the words and is in the inner word, the substance, and the sense. Thus the apologist has been relieved of the peril of resting the whole doctrine of inspiration upon the adjective verbal, and the critics have led Christian scholars back to the sounder position of the great Protestant Reformers.*

* See p. 64.

5. In the department of the Higher Criticism recent criticisms have shown that the traditional theories that David wrote all the Psalter, Solomon all the Wisdom Literature, and Moses all the Pentateuch, are untenable. These theories are without sufficient historical support, and are against the internal evidence of the writings themselves. Those who rest their faith in the inspiration of these writings upon their attachment to the names of these holy men of Israel have been disturbed by recent criticisms, and so far their lines of evidences for the inspiration of the Scriptures have been destroyed. But recent criticisms have also shown that the Psalter is the product of the religious experience of God's people in the many centuries of the history of Israel; that the literature of Hebrew Wisdom is the fruit of the wise men of Israel of many generations; and that the Pentateuch is composed of four parallel narratives with four codes of legislation, resembling, in many respects, the four Gospels in their characteristic differences and harmony.

The older scholars paid no attention to the literary features of the Bible. They did not distinguish poetry from prose, and dealt with the literature of Wisdom very much as they used the work of the chronicler. They refused to find any fiction in the Scriptures, and used the whole Bible as if it were a law book, a quarry for doctrines. But the Higher Criticism of recent times has carefully distinguished poetry from prose, and has discovered a large amount of poetry in the historical books of the Old Testament and the New Testament. It has classified the poetry and studied it in its structure and in its varieties of form. It has distinguished the several kinds of history and prophecy, and has not been blind to the beauties of fiction and the proprieties of its use. And thus the Old Testament has become a new

book, vastly more attractive to the people, as well as to the scholar. This enhanced appreciation of the literary excellence of the Bible has opened up fresh lines of evidence for its inspiration.

6. Modern criticism has established two entirely new theological disciplines, namely, Biblical Theology and Contemporary History of the Bible. Contemporary History sets the Bible in the midst of the external history of the world in which the history of redemption took place. It enables us to see the influence of other nations with their literature, religion, and civilization upon Israel, the people of God. It gives us a test by which to examine the Biblical records. On the whole, a flood of light has been thrown upon the Bible. Many old difficulties have been removed, but other and more difficult questions have been raised. The results have very much changed the lines of Christian evidence, and are likely to change them still more in the future.

Biblical theology traces the development of the divine revelation contained in the Bible. It shows us the several temperaments of human nature, such as we find everywhere in history, reflected there in differences of type and various points of view from which the religion of the Bible is presented. The variety of the Bible is very great in its religious, doctrinal, and ethical conceptions. There are those who press these variations into inconsistencies, and even contradictions, so as to destroy the credibility of the Bible. But recent criticisms have shown that these varieties combine in a higher unity. The harmony of the Bible, coming from so many different authors, in different periods of the world, writing in different languages and from different points of view, vastly strengthens the evidences for the credibility and

the inspiration of the Scriptures as an organic whole, the product of one divine Spirit.

In all directions recent criticisms have been destructive of false methods and traditional errors, and to this extent have disarranged the lines of Christian evidence and wrought destruction. But, on the other hand, recent criticisms have constructed better methods, have revived the older and better doctrine of the Reformation, and have led to a closer study of the contents of the Bible. Biblical criticism teaches that the Scriptures are to be interpreted from their *centre*, and no longer from a small section of their circumference.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

The second great field for debate in our times is the Future Life. Here the consensus of Christendom is little, the dissensus is great, the questions undefined greater still. Dogmaticians have enlarged upon the Creeds, and the popular theology has filled up the outlines of the future life with crude notions and fantastic theories. But the Christian Church is not responsible for these, and no scholar will respect them sufficiently to regard them in any sense as the barriers to research. The same conflict is waged here between the progressives and conservatives as in the department of Biblical Criticism. The discussion leaps the bounds of the denominations and the lines of battle are entirely independent of churchly considerations.

The future life has been a blank or else a terror to most Protestants and the comfortable hopes inspired by the New Testament have not been enjoyed. The study of the future state in recent times has exposed the faults of the older dogmaticians. It has shown that the doc-

trine of a private judgment at death has no support in the Scriptures or the Creeds, and that it obstructed and obscured the doctrine of the *dies iræ*, the ultimate judgment of the world.* It has shown that the current theology confuses and confounds the hell and heaven of the middle state and the hell and heaven of the ultimate state after the day of judgment, and it has accordingly made the middle state more of a reality to many minds.† It has held up the light of Christian ethics and shown that the doctrine of immediate sanctification at death is contrary to the Scripture and the Creeds, and has filled the middle state with ethical contents as a place for Christian sanctification.‡ It has called attention to the fact that Jesus Christ knows of but one unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Spirit; and asks what is its significance in view of the middle state. It has revived the doctrine of the Apostles' Creed, of the descent of Jesus into hades, His preaching to the imprisoned spirits and His redemption of souls from the ancient abode of the dead. It has called attention to the inconsistency into which the Church has drifted in the new doctrine of the universal salvation of infants, and has demanded that this doctrine shall be considered in some way, so as to correspond with the Protestant doctrine of the order of salvation.§ It has so pressed the awfulness of the doctrine of the eternal damnation of the heathen world, exceeding the Christian world by hundreds of millions, that the older doctrine of the damnation of all heathen has been abandoned, and efforts have been made to find some mode of relief by which some or many of the heathen may be saved by the grace of God.‖ All these questions are now in dispute. Men are seeking relief by

* See p. 195. † See pp. 207 *seq.* ‡ See p. 147.
§ See pp. 133 *seq.* ‖ See p. 118.

the doctrine of the extension of redemption into the middle state, by conditional immortality, by annihilation of the wicked, and by reaction to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The interest in these questions of the future life is wide-spread and is increasing. There must be liberty of investigation and room for differences in the transition period through which we are passing. The results will be of incalculable advantage to the Church — for when the future life has become more real, more certain, more fixed, in the hopes and anticipations of men, this life will gain its significance as a preparation and vestibule of the better life to come, Christians will live in hope, expectation, and desire, and this hope will work mightily in the consecration and sanctification of men.

In the discussion of the First things and the Last things, Protestantism is now engaged upon the great things of our religion. The First things will strengthen our faith by establishing it on the living God of the Bible instead of upon the letters of a book. The Last things will inspire our hope by fixing it upon the enthroned Christ, the holy catholic Church, and the communion of saints in that realm to which we are all going after a brief interval in this world.

THE HOLY LIFE.

The third great question of debate at the present time is Sanctification and the related topics of Christian Ethics, Repentance, and a Holy Life. If Puritans and Presbyterians had been faithful to the Westminster Standards they would have led in this discussion from the vantage ground given in the Puritan doctrine of sanctification.* But their unfaithfulness has lost them

* See Chap. vi.

this advantage, so that the question of sanctification has also become a discussion that pervades more or less all denominations. And what more encouraging sign for the future can we have than the study of a holy life? This is that which is to bind the First things and the Last things together. The Church has halted too long at the beginning of the Christian life, as if our entire redemption consisted in regeneration, justification, simple faith, and imputed righteousness. Is it not high time that we should give our attention to deeds of repentance, live as children of God and heirs of heaven, pursue sanctification and a holy life, and aim at the completion of the kingdom of God in this world, not only by the conversion of all men, but by the sanctification of ourselves and others? The imputed righteousness of Christ ought to stimulate men to share in the impartation of that righteousness in the grace of sanctification; and if we truly believe in Him, fix our hopes upon Him as our Redeemer, we should be transformed into His image. It is high time that a holy life of sanctification should be the ideal life for which every Christian should strive. The error that sanctification cannot be accomplished in this life paralyzes every effort.* The error that sanctification will be immediately completed at death as by a magical act of God encourages men to sluggishness in their sanctification in this life.† These errors must be banished from our theology and our life, the minds of men must be fixed upon our enthroned Saviour as the ideal of holiness; and if they once learn that their everlasting destiny depends upon their conformity to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that it is the design of the divine plan of redemption that they

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* See p. 148.

† See p. 147.

should become Christlike, they will make this the one end and aim of their lives.

Inseparably connected with the doctrine of sanctification are the doctrines of the heavenly reign of Christ, of the kingdom of God, of the life in the middle state, and of the second advent, and many other kindred doctrines that need the special attention of the men of our times. Now, these are the questions in which all the Churches of Christendom are alike interested, whither every one of them needs to direct its attention in order to its own internal development. And these are the doctrines that will, when once determined, shed that light upon the questions of discord that is so greatly needed by all the churches, and which will harmonize them all in the bright sunlight of the whole truth of God.

THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

Christian Union has become one of the burning questions of the day. Unity is a grand ideal of the Church of Christ. The Church, built on the rock against which the gates of Hades will not prevail, is one church. The kingdom into whose gates the disciples are admitted, and whose king is Christ, is and can be but one kingdom.* Jesus Christ, the true vine, is the source of life and fruitfulness to all the branches. Without vital union and abiding communion with Him there is no spiritual life; and all the branches are, through Him, in organic union with one another.† The good Shepherd promised His sheep that "they shall become one flock, one shepherd." ‡ And accordingly our Saviour prayed for His disciples:

"That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may

* Matt. xvi. 18–20. † John xv. 1–8. ‡ John x. 16.

believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one."*

Our Saviour seldom employs the term church. He ordinarily employs the kingdom, flock, and vine, the familiar terms of the Old Testament prophets. These terms alike, indicate in their Old Testament usage, the unity of the people of God. They are one people, one congregation, one flock, one vine, one kingdom. The division of the Jewish nation was a divine judgment for sin. The reunion of Israel and Judah is an abiding hope of prophecy.† The apostles hold forth this same ideal of the unity of Christ's Church. They do not so often use the term kingdom. There is a tendency to use the kingdom more with reference to the kingdom of glory that comes with the second advent, while they use the church more frequently instead of the kingdom of redemption. However, the epistle to the Colossians represents that the heavenly Father "delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love";‡ and the epistle to the Hebrews teaches that Christians have received "a kingdom that cannot be shaken."§

Peter applies the covenant at Horeb to Christians as an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession; and combines with it the figure of the spiritual house, the holy temple built up of living stones on Jesus Christ, the corner-stone.‖ He also speaks of the flock of God and the chief shepherd.¶ The synonymous expressions, people, royal priesthood,

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* John xvii. 21-23. † Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy," pp. 165 *seq.*

‡ Col. i. 13. § Heb. xii. 27. ‖ 1 Peter ii. 4-9. ¶ 1 Peter v. 2-4.

flock, and temple combine to represent the unity and spirituality of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Apocalypse* and the epistle to the Hebrews† agree in representing the body of Christians as the city of God, the New Jerusalem. This is also a conception of Old Testament prophecy.‡ The epistle to the Hebrews uses the city of God in parallelism with "general assembly and church of the first-born."§

Saint Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, heaps up a number of representations. Those who were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel have been united to it by breaking down the partitioned wall. Both Jew and Gentile have been reconciled in one body unto God. They are fellow-citizens of the saints, of the household of God, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom each several building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."‖ Here the conceptions of kingdom, household, and temple combine with that of body to represent in various ways and from different points of view the unity and spirituality, the holiness and the vital energy of the organized body of Christians. The favorite conception of the apostle Paul is that the church is the body of Christ. "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another."¶ "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free;

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* xxi. † xii. 22, 23. ‡ In Jer. iii. 14–18; Ezek. xl.–xlix.; Isaiah lx.
§ Hebrews xii. 22. ‖ Eph. ii. 12–22. ¶ Rom. xii. 5.

and were all made to drink of one Spirit."* The heavenly Father put all things under the feet of Christ, "and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."† The apostle also represents the relation between Christ and His Church as a marriage relation. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."‡

All of these conceptions of the apostles are synonymous, and set forth in various forms and from different points of view the unique relation of Christ and His disciples. They are the kingdom, He is the king; they are the city of which He is the light and glory; they are the temple, He is the corner-stone; they are the body, He is the head; they are the flock, He is the chief shepherd; they are the people, He has purchased them to Himself; they are a family of which God is the father and He is the elder brother; they are the wife, He is the husband. None of these terms in their Biblical usage will allow us to think of more than one organization, or of any other principle of organization than the life and love of Jesus Christ.§

The unity of Christ's Church is in Christ, the head, the king, and it can be found in no other person. It is centred at the throne of Christ, at the right hand of the

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* 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. † Eph. i. 22, 23; see also Col. i. 18.

‡ Eph. v. 25–27.

§ "Alle diese Begriffe sind so geartet dass sie die Vorstellung *mehrerer* Kirchen Christi schlechterdings ausschliessen" (Julius Müller, *Die evang. Union*, p. 28. Berlin, 1854).

Father in heaven ; it cannot be in any place on earth. The kingdom is composed of all who are united to Christ, in all ages from the beginning of the world until the close of this dispensation. It embraces the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles and martyrs, the fathers and theologians, the saints and heroes of the Church in all epochs ; from all lands multitudes innumerable gathered about the throne of God and the Lamb. The Scriptures give several glimpses of this Church of Christ.* The Church of Jesus Christ is therefore chiefly in heaven, where He is. The Church on earth is but the vestibule, the outer court of the heavenly temple.† If all Christians in the world could be assembled in one vast multitude, they would be a small company compared with the multitude about the heavenly throne. The visible Church prior to the Reformation had merged the invisible Church on earth in itself. The Reformation revived the Biblical doctrines of the universal priesthood of believers and immediate access to the throne of Christ by faith ; and thus made the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church one of the characteristic features of Protestantism. The Reformers did not teach that there were two Churches, but that the one Church was in great part invisible, and in some part visible here on earth, in accordance with the external conformity of Christians to the doctrines and institutions of Christ Himself. This distinction between the visible and invisible Church has been denied in recent times by Rothe and others ; but it has been reaffirmed by Julius Müller,‡ Dorner, and other chief divines of the Protestant Churches.

* Rev. vii. 9, *seq.* ; xix. 6, *seq.* ; Heb xii. 23. † Rev. xi. 2, *seq.*

‡ "Und gewiss, so lange die evangelische Kirche auf dem Grunde des göttlichen Wortes verharren wird, so lange wird es ihr formell und materiell unmöglich sein sich von der Idee der unsichtbaren Kirche loszusagen" (Müller, *Dogmatische Abhandlungen.* Bremen, 1870, p. 402)

The historical Church has too often committed the sin of exaggerating its own importance over against the vastly greater, more extensive, and holier Church that is gathered about the throne of Christ composed of all those, wherever they may be, who are in vital union and communion with Him. The Church in this world is visible in a considerable number of ecclesiastical organizations. It is sinful pride and arrogance for any one of them to claim the exclusive rights and privileges of the visible Church of Christ.* It is easy to see that no one of them can be identified with the Church on earth; for no one of them embraces all true Christians, and no one of them is so pure that it contains none but Christians. Furthermore, if all the churches on earth could be combined in one ecclesiastical organization they could not be identified with the Church of Christ; for they would still leave outside their pale multitudes of real Christians; that is, vast numbers of unbaptized children, who are the elect of God and belong to the Church of the redeemed; and large numbers from among the heathen who have never had an opportunity of attaching themselves to any form of the visible Church. And, on the other hand, all the churches contain not a few hypocrites, who are not real Christians at all. The visible Church is, at the best, a poor and faint reflection of the ideal Church. The holy and undefiled bride of the Lamb is not on earth, but in heaven, where He is. The Church on earth is defiled with sin, error, and imperfection of every kind. It is the work of redemption, very largely,

* "Nur Sünde und zwar gehäufte Sünde kann die Eine Kirche in ihrer Erscheinung in eine Vielheit von Kirchen zerspalten, welche die positive Gemeinschaft mit einander aufgeben, und immer sind Kirchenspaltungen schwere Gerichte über die erscheinende Kirche" (Dorner, *Glaubenslehre*, II., pp. 913, 914).

to cleanse the historical and visible forms of Christianity.

The ideal of the Church is visible unity, but the visible Church cannot entirely attain its ideal until its completion in Jesus Christ. Before the Second Advent the visible will correspond with the invisible only in part. It will grow nearer the goal, but will not altogether reach it.

Notwithstanding the external discord in the Church, there is vastly greater external unity than is generally supposed to be the case. The most essential things in the Christian religion, the real fundamentals, are the common property of all the ecclesiastical organizations of Christendom.

Archbishop Ussher well says:

"Thus if at this day we should take a survey of the several professions of Christianity, that have any large spread in any part of the world . . . . and should put by the points wherein they did differ one from another, and gather into one body the rest of the Articles wherein they all did generally agree, we should find that in those propositions, which without all controversie are universally received in the whole Christian world, so much truth is contained, as being joyned with holy obedience, may be sufficient to bring a man unto everlasting salvation." *

All Christians hold to the sacred Scriptures as the inspired word of God to guide the Church in religion, doctrine, and morals. The Apostles' Creed is the symbol of the universal Church. Christians of every name enter the visible Church by the sacrament of baptism and partake of the Supper of the Lord, whatever may be their views of the meaning of these sacraments. They all engage in the worship of God on the Lord's day. They all use the Lord's Prayer as a guide to their devotions.

* Ussher's "A Brief Declaration of the Universalitie of the Church. A Sermon before the King," 1624, p. 28.

Their worship has essentially the same substance, however varied may be its forms of expression. The Ten Commandments and Christ's law of love are the universal laws of Christian morals. Now, these are the great verities of the Christian religion. They are vastly more important than those other things about which the Churches of Christendom differ, and concerning which there is strife and discord. The calm and abiding concord of Christendom is vastly more profound than the noisy and superficial discord.

WORLD-WIDE CONFLICT.

In all these questions of the times the Westminster Confession is in advance of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches and points the way of progress. The Church ought to be in advance of the Confession. But the Confession is in advance of the Church, so that the children of the Puritans must first advance to the high mark of their own standards before they can go beyond them into the higher reaches of Christian theology.

The old questions that divide the Churches are giving way to these new questions, and the divisions of theologians are on lines that cross the barriers of the denominations. The sectarian divisions are becoming merged in the vastly greater and more important conflict between the conservatives and the progressives in all the Churches.

Here is the world-wide conflict which is now upon us, that will make questions of theology the most important of all questions, for the people as well as for the ministry; that will exalt theology to her throne as the queen of science; and that will advance the religion of our Saviour in a new reformation that will conquer the

world for Christ, consecrate it, sanctify it, and prepare it for His advent in glory. Such a world-wide conflict will give us the unity for which Christendom yearns.

"By and by, men will be looking back and wondering at us Christians in these last years of the nineteenth century, that we so poorly understood the Gospel, overlaying it, some of us with ritual, others with dogma. Lament it, my brethren. We have much to be ashamed of. But let not your heart be troubled. More Pentecosts than one have come already. And more are yet to come, with rushing pinions and tongues of flame."*

True unity is to be attained by conserving all that is good in the past achievements of the Church, and by advancing to still higher attainments. The Holy Spirit will guide the Church and the Christian scholar in the present and the future as He has in the past. The Creeds give us what has already been attained. We take our stand on them and build higher. Progress is possible only by research, discussion, and conflict. The more conflict the better. Battle for the truth is infinitely better than stagnation in error. Every error should be slain as soon as possible. If it be our error we should be the most anxious to get rid of it. Error is our greatest foe. Truth is the most precious possession. There can be no unity save in the truth, and no perfect unity save in the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Let us unite in the truth already gained and agree to contend in Christian love and chivalry for the truth that has not yet been sufficiently determined, having faith that in due time the Divine Spirit will make all things clear to us.

Christian churches should go right on in the lines drawn by their own history and their own symbols; this will in the end lead to greater heights, on which

* R. D. Hitchcock, "Eternal Atonement," p. 300.

there will be concord. Imperfect statements will be corrected by progress. All forms of error will disappear before the breath of truth. We are not to tear down what has cost our fathers so much. We are rather to strengthen the foundations and buttress the buildings as we build higher. Let the light shine, higher and higher, the clear, bright light of day. Truth fears no light. Light chases error away. True orthodoxy seeks the full blaze of the noontide sun. In the light of such a day the unity of Christendom will be gained.

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